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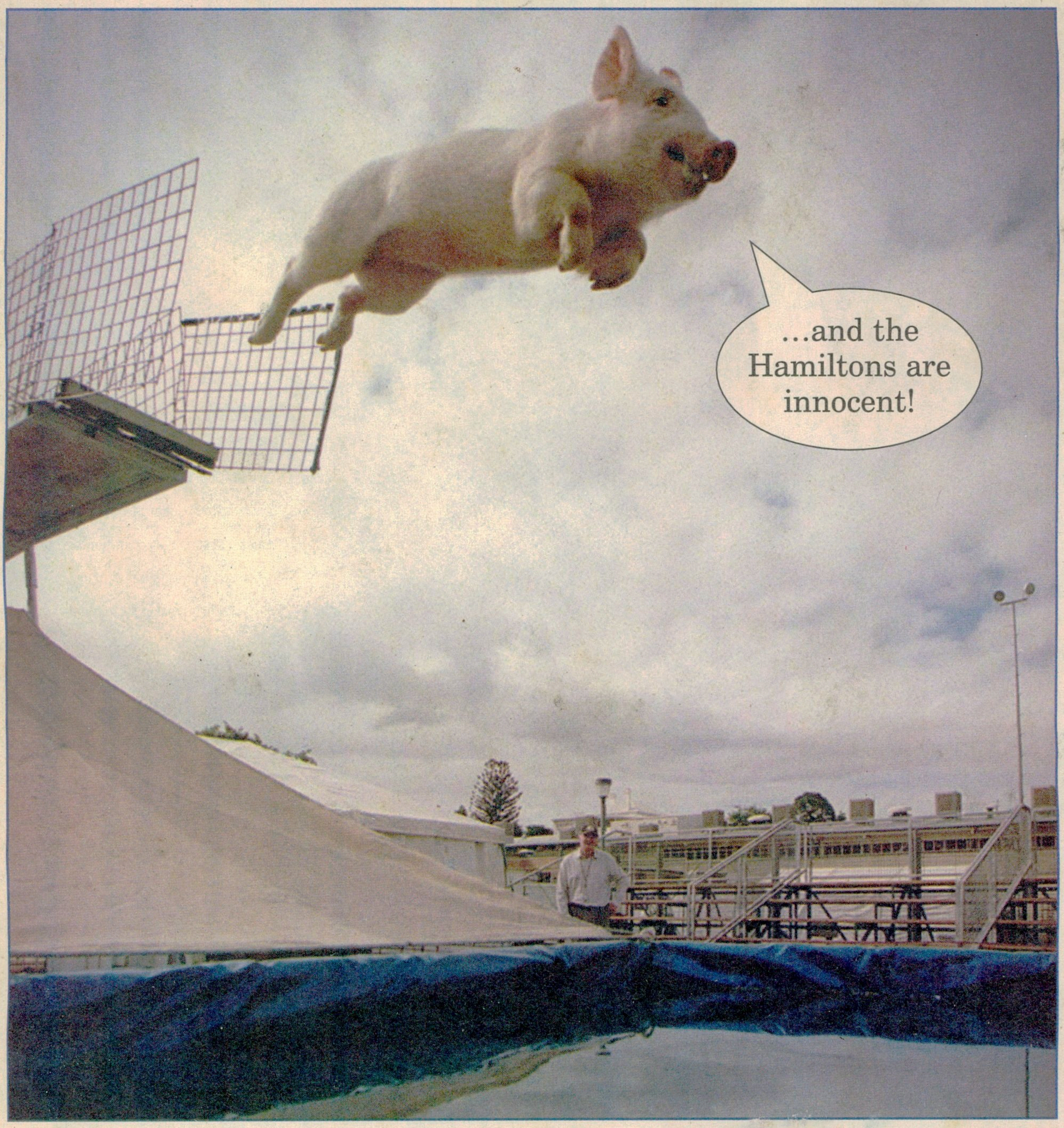

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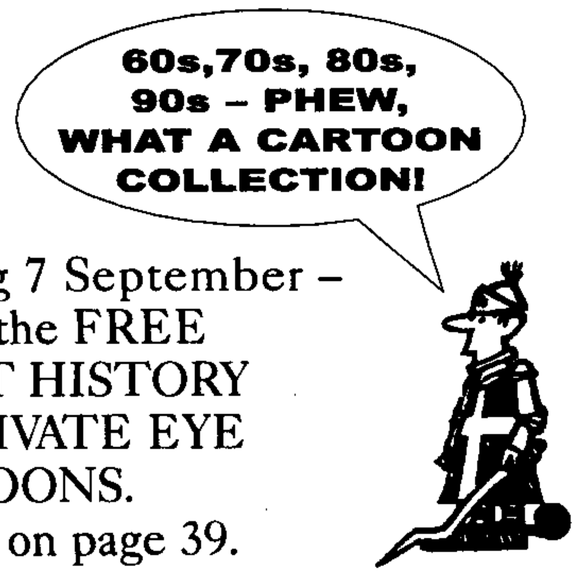

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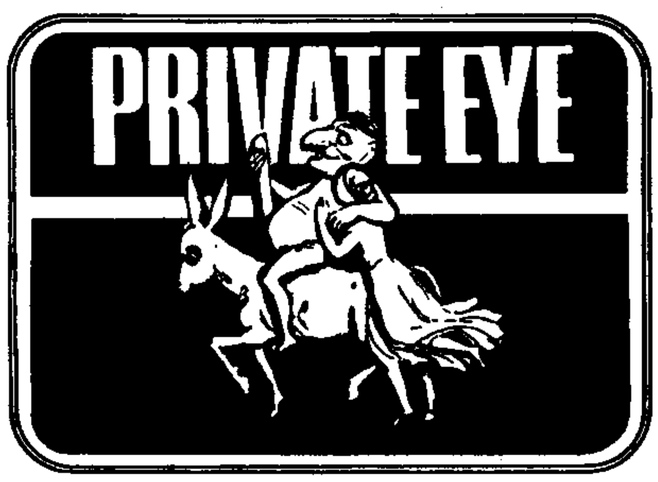

Swine Fever!

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ANOTHER key witness in the Jeffrey Archer libel trial was approached to stop him giving evidence against the former Tory party deputy chairman. The *Eye* has learnt how Archer, serving four years for perjury and perverting the course of justice, made an offer "to reward" Aziz Kurtha, who said he had seen Archer visiting the prostitute Monica Coghlan.

Kurtha, an Indian-born British lawyer and former presenter of the TV show *Eastern Eye*, refused and gave evidence for the *Daily Star* at Archer's libel case instead.

Kurtha's testimony was that he saw Archer visiting Coghlan at a west London hotel after himself using her services in September 1986. He said he challenged the politician, saying: "You're Jeffrey Archer, vice-chairman of the Conservative party." Archer covered his face, he said.

Archer later claimed it was a case of mistaken identity. Kurtha tipped off the *News of the Screws*, resulting in the first story linking Archer to Coghlan. It was the *Screws* that photographed Archer's friend Michael Stacpoole at Victoria station giving Coghlan a cash-stuffed envelope enabling her to go abroad. Archer then paid Stacpoole £40,000 to go to France during the libel trial.

Kurtha's friends revealed that an intermediary, a Pakistani businessman, also told Kurtha that Archer would reward him if he left the country during the trial. "A Pakistani guy contacted him on Archer's behalf and told him to go away to Paris," one close associate explained. "He'll look after you," he was told. Archer failed to stop Kurtha giving evidence; but his evidence was eventually undermined after a devastating cross-examination.

Kurtha made no mention of the bribe at the time. But the tapes of the Archer-Coghlan conversations recorded by the *Screws* contain clues. Coghlan told Archer that another client (Kurtha) had recognised him and offered money for her story.

Archer replied that he wanted to track him down: "Get his name and I will get him off your back." In a later conversation, he said: "I've done two things today which will frighten them."

Coghlan: *What's that?*
Archer: *I can't tell you, erm, but I can assure you that it has been done.*
Coghlan: *Did you speak to Kurtha?*
Archer: *No, certainly not.*
Coghlan: *Did you have somebody speak to him?*
Archer: *Indeed. You're sure it's him?*
Coghlan: *I'm sure it's him.*

FULL marks for chutzpah to Lady Archer, who complains that it is now "open season" on her husband – as if he were some hapless and innocent victim of press intrusion.

In her interview on the *Today* programme last week the fragrant Mary was particularly indignant at the suggestion that her husband had claimed all the credit for raising £57m for the Kurds. When John Humphrys asked if Jeffrey had been "the architect of his own misfortune" by falsely boasting that his Simple Truth (*sic*) campaign was responsible for the whole £57m, she cut in crossly: "Well, would you kindly quote please what he said that you think was misleading and makes him the architect of his own misfortune."

Perhaps she has forgotten the press conference her husband gave on 19 June 1991, at which he announced the results of his efforts. "Today's figure exceeds even our most optimistic expectations," he declared. "It is a marvellous response to an appeal which has touched so many people across the world… This brought the final total of the Simple Truth campaign to a staggering £57,042,000." He rammed home the message by posing for photographers with a banner carrying the figure £57,042,000.

It is still unclear how much money Archer actually raised, or how much reached its intended recipients. But at least one Kurd had cause to be grateful to the master story-teller: a couple of years later Archer bought 50,000 Anglia TV shares on behalf of his new Kurdish chum Broosk Saib, which were sold soon afterwards – following news of a takeover bid – for an instant profit of £80,000. Now that it is "open season", perhaps Broosk Saib will at last get round to explaining this remarkable evidence of Archer's charitable spirit.

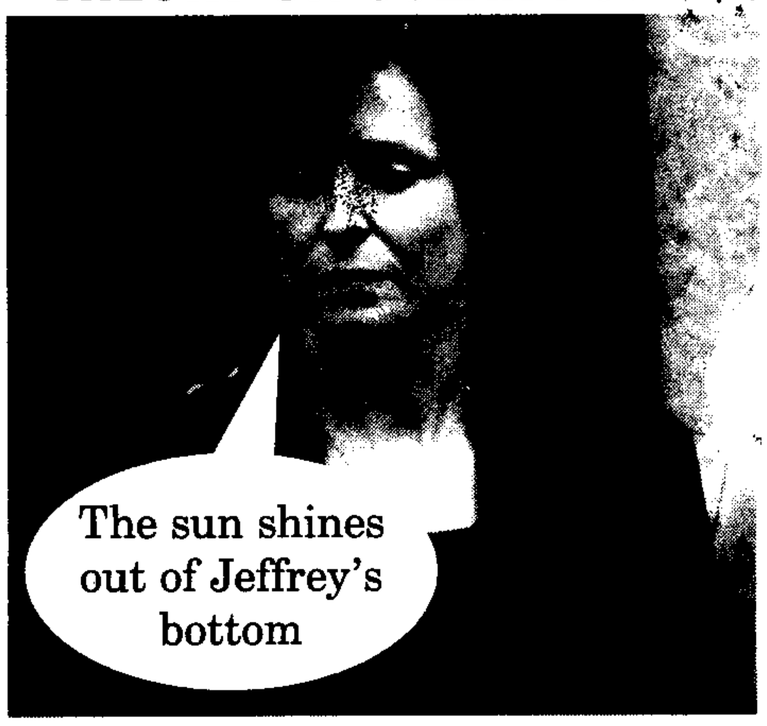
MUCH tittering in the tabloids this week over the revelation that the chateau near Toulouse where the Blairs are completing their epic holiday was once used as the set of a porn movie. But a more serious question about their choice of French accommodation remains unasked.

The house belongs to Sir David Keene, a senior judge who has allowed the Blair family to stay there every summer since Tony became PM. In August 1997, only days after the Blairs had enjoyed a holiday at the 12th-century chateau, Keene was the high court judge who granted the government an injunction banning the *Mail on Sunday* from printing any further embarrassing disclosures from ex-MI5 man David Shayler.

Last July, shortly before Tony and Cherie headed off for France yet again, their chum Derry Irvine made Keene an appeal court judge. (At the same time, incidentally, Irvine also promoted his own brother-in-law Sir Andrew Longmore to the appeal court.) Despite his closeness to the Blairs, Keene clearly sees no conflict of interest in adjudicating on actions involving his friend's government: this summer he has been hearing a case brought against the home secretary by the legal services commission.

No doubt he is indeed a pillar of judicial independence. However, given the importance of the separation between executive and judiciary, mightn't it be more seemly for the Blairs to find somewhere else to stay?

LADY ARCHER'S NEW THEORY ON SOLAR POWER



Street of Shame

POOR Michael Gove. Not only is his status as authorised biographer of Michael Portillo worth about as much as a set of used Portuguese fly-buttons, but he is also now the object of derision for colleagues at Wapping.

Gove, assistant editor of the *Times*, is soon to wed the paper's arts editor, Sarah Vine. It's a grand affair – stag night at Cliveden, wedding in the south of France. So grand, indeed, that young Michael seems to be a bit strapped for cash. The *Daily Telegraph*'s media diary revealed last week that he had been reduced to negotiating a "facility trip" in order to take his wife on honeymoon to Mexico.

A one-off incident of freeloading might perhaps have been overlooked, but for a detail which the *Torygraph* missed. An email to Gove from Vickers PR, which represents the Mexican hotel, mentions that in order to assemble their bargain-basement honeymoon Sarah and Michael have recruited the services of Quintessentially, the new firm run by Tom Parker Bowles and Ben Elliot.

This same Ben Elliot, the young man freshly enriched by Associated Newspapers for not having shagged Jade Jagger on a beach, featured in the *Times* on the day after the *Telegraph* item. A glowing piece across half a page described him as "an amiably good fellow with a very sound head on his shoulders" and drew attention to Quintessentially, "the on-line club which specialises in fixing the unfixable".

The author of this puff-piece? Sarah Vine, of course. Fixing the unfixable may be just a little easier with friends like this.

LIES, DAMNED LIES AND RICHARD DESMOND

PORN baron Richard Desmond, boss of Northern & Shell, must have been delighted to read the *Daily Star* and *Daily Express* on 1 August. His newspapers reported the glad tidings that a high court judgment had "shifted the balance in favour of Northern & Shell" in its acrimonious dispute with the *Telegraph* over West Ferry printers, which is jointly owned by Desmond and Conrad Black.

Like so much of the "journalism" published in Desmond's tawdry organs, the story was pure hogwash. Dirty Des had actually lost the case, and been ordered to pay six-figure costs – and been subjected to an extraordinary judicial condemnation by Sir Andrew Morritt, vice chancellor of the chancery division.

The saga began soon after Desmond's arrival at the Grey Lubyanka, when the *Torygraph* tried to exercise its right to buy out Express Newspapers' 50 percent stake in West Ferry, for about £18m. Desmond claimed that because the *Telegraph* had missed the 42-day deadline specified in their agreement, it was obliged to buy his stake at a price named by him – which was about £83m. When the *Telegraph* refused, Desmond petitioned the high court to force Conrad Black to pay up.

There was much complicated argument in court about whether or not the *Telegraph* had in fact met the deadline. The testimony of chief executive Dan Colson was flatly contradicted by Dirty Des's henchman Martin Ellice, managing director of Express Newspapers, and it became increasingly clear that one side or other must be lying.

Their accounts of a meeting between Desmond, Ellis and Colson on 10 January 2001, for instance, were wholly irreconcilable. "According to Mr Colson there was no discussion about price or valuation; Mr Ellice said that prices were mentioned," Sir Andrew Morritt noted in his judgment. "Insofar as there is any material difference between the account of the meeting given by Mr Colson and that given by Mr Desmond and Mr Ellice, for the reasons I shall give later, I accept that given by Mr Colson and reject that given by Mr Desmond and Mr Ellice."

What were these reasons? "In giving his oral evidence Mr Ellice demonstrated on at least three important occasions either an inability to see the point of the question or a determination not to answer it. The time he took to answer questions by reference to a document was far greater than that needed to read and understand both the document and the question. He gave me the clear impression of one determined to stick at all costs to a pre-determined script."

Morritt was particularly unimpressed by Ellice's explanation of a letter sent by Express Newspapers to the Telegraph Group after the meeting of 10 January. "The statement was false and Mr Ellice knew it was… I do not have sufficient confidence in Mr Ellice's recollection or veracity to place reliance on his uncorroborated evidence. I have no such doubts about the evidence of Mr Colson."

In short, a senior high court judge has effecively denounced Dirty Desmond's right-hand man as a shifty little liar. Has Dirty Des retreated in embarrassment, with his tail between his legs? Not at all: he is now demanding that he, Martin Ellice and two other henchmen – Paul Ashford and Stan "Sleazebag" Myerson – be appointed to the board of West Ferry printers. *Torygraph* bosses are understandably horrified at the prospect.

Meanwhile, the wives of several senior executives from both West Ferry and the *Torygraph* have recently been scared out of their wits by anonymous and menacing phone calls of the "we-know-where-you-live" variety. Clearly, Desmond and his cronies would never stoop so low. So who *is* behind this hitherto unreported campaign of intimidation? Perhaps Inspector Knacker might care to investigate.

IN THE past couple of years the *Daily Telegraph* and its sister paper the *Spectator* have developed something of an obsession with the deputy editor of the *Guardian*, Georgina Henry – who, as they often remind readers, lives with the Irish pro-republican author Ronan Bennett.

At the beginning of last year, under the headline "The Republican Cell at the Heart of the *Guardian*", the *Spectator* pundit Stephen Glover reported that Georgina Henry had written several editorials on Ireland which he thought dangerously sympathetic to Sinn Fein.

Alas! It turned out that Henry had never written a leader on Ireland in her life – and, at the time of the editorials which so annoyed Glover, had in fact been away on maternity leave.

Last Thursday the *Daily Telegraph* returned to the fray, denouncing a *Guardian* editorial the previous day on the arrest of three IRA men in Colombia. "The *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger is on holiday," it noted, "and his deputy, Georgina Henry, lives with Ronan Bennett, the prominent republican sympathiser and writer" – the clear implication being that naughty Henry had been smuggling republican propaganda into the leader column during Rubbisher's absence.

Alas! Georgina Henry had nothing to do with the offending editorial, or indeed with editing the paper. She was away from work at the time – starting another stint of, er, maternity leave. If she wishes to prevent further attacks from the *Torygraph* and *Spectator*, contraception may be the only solution.

CONGRATULATIONS to *Daily Express* hack David Smith who had the unenviable task of writing up *Top Santé* magazine's silly season survey of the celebrity men and women with the best and worst bodies.

Every other newspaper running the story managed to list the "winners", but the *Express* merely gave the Top 5 Men followed by the No 1 and No 6 women.

This careful editing ensured that *Express* columnist Vanessa Feltz – whose body was voted second worst – was not mentioned in her own paper at all.

Was this was to spare her feelings… or because proprietor Richard Desmond is planning to introduce pay-per-view coverage of Vanessa stripping in the shower and doesn't want to jeopardise sales?

READERS of the *Daily Express* have put up with many changes in their paper lately; for some of them, however, a recent embellishment to the TV page may be more than they (or their children) can stomach. Every day, alongside the satellite listings for Sky One and UK Gold, the paper now prints full listings for Fantasy, the porn channel owned by Dirty Desmond.

Among the delights trailed in the *Express* last week were *Sorority Sex Kittens*, *Webcam Girls*, *Filipino Girls*, *Sex Fest*, *Extreme Close-Up*, *Addicted to Lust*, *Aural Sex* and the unmissable family entertainment, *Anal Princess*.

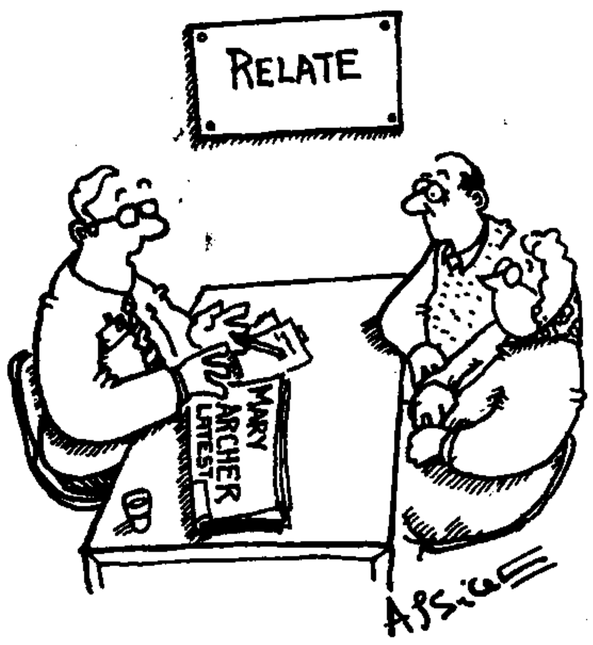
THE thoughts of Chairman Mo, Part 94… "Where are the unions now?" thunders Harrods boss Mohamed Fayed in his column in *Punch* (prop: M. Fayed).

"Today the working people of Britain are faced with an arrogant, uncaring government. Many are at the mercy of their employers. Once [the unions] were a beacon of light to ordinary people everywhere, because they knew that there was something they could rely on in tough times".

Er, it must have been another M. Fayed whose Harrods store has been so regularly and extensively lambasted by put-upon ex-employees at various employment tribunals. And it must be another Harrods whose respect for trade union rights was such that the store boss ordered underlings to bug the phones of the shopworkers' union, USDAW.

A MORI poll which found that almost a third of workers in the UK have lied on their CVs made the headlines in the *Times*, the *FT*, the *Independent*, the *Express* and many other newspapers, although it was little more than a PR puff for CV Validation.com, the CV screening company which commissioned the survey.

What none of the papers mentioned was that Mark Castle, the managing director of CV Validation.com, might not want anyone prying too closely into his own curriculum vitae. In the last 18 months Mr Castle and two of his other companies, MC Investigations and The Bunny Club, have totted up at least three county court judgments against them amounting to more than £30,000.



"I recommend adultery, prostitutes, pulp fiction and a gaol sentence for perjury!"

SUNDAY *Telegraph* editor Dominic Lawson has been plagued by allegations that he once worked as an agent for British security services – which he strenuously denied.

So he will be intrigued to learn that his new sparring partner, *Daily Telegraph* editor Charles Moore, was spotted leaving the imposing Embankment HQ of MI5 shortly after lunch a fortnight ago.

TALKING of spooks *News of the World* crime editor Peter Rose is finding it difficult to stop acting like a resident copper, a habit he picked up at the Daily Mail where he was chief crime correspondent until last December.

Unused to the cloak and dagger-style of the *Screws*, Rose has been trying to pressurise colleagues into talking to his intelligence contacts. On 5 August an exposé of the "BOMB-MAD MASTERMIND BEHIND REAL IRA TERROR" appeared in the *Screws* under the by-line Peter Rose, Ian Kirby and Christine Hart. Two days later Rose telephoned Hart, a freelance hack who is writing a book about the Real IRA and whose contacts had provided the material in the article. He told her that he had a friend in MI5 who wanted to talk to her because she might be party to "low-grade intelligence".

Taken aback, Hart said she knew nothing that would be of any interest to MI5, as her Real IRA contacts know full well that she is a journalist writing for the national press. When she told Rose that she would not be able to return to her contacts knowing that she had spoken to an intelligence officer, he replied: "Well, you'll just have to do it. There's a nice way or a nasty way."

MORALE among *Sunday Business* hacks has plunged even lower following an excruciating email from deputy editor Richard "Nanny" Northedge complaining that they're all useless.

"Having news-edited for the past two weeks I now realise what unacceptably poor quality copy [the news editor] receives each week," Nanny's email begins. "Almost no-one's output is clean enough to go in the paper without significant work on it. Do not expect the news editor to read copy which the author has not bothered to read."

He continues: "*Sunday Business* readers do not pocket pay rises, trouser bonuses, and they are not bosses, they have titles that you have to check… I could go on: people introduced into stories without saying who they are, knighthoods omitted…" Shock! Horror!

The email was sent the day after bewildered staff attended the leaving do of the paper's chief investigative reporter, Mark Watts, who was fired for daring to object to the disbandment of his investigation unit. In recent months *Sunday Business* has also lost editor Jeff "Essex boy" Randall to the BBC, and news editor Frank Kane and City editor Richard Wachman to the *Observer*. The paper, part of the Barclay brothers' media empire run by Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neil, has been in a tailspin ever since – and now even the deputy editor admits that it is "unacceptably poor". The newspaper's dwindling band of readers is, of course, fast reaching the same conclusion.

HACKWATCH

The Prating Season

19 July: A sure sign that the silly season has started is a sudden increase in fatuous why-oh-why pieces by rent-a-hack David Thomas. Today's offering, in the *Daily Mail*, asks: "Have you ever noticed how people boast about stress?"

20 July: Quentin Letts, another hack-of-all-trades, seems to be feeling the stress of keeping up with David Thomas. He attempts to entertain *Daily Mail* readers with yet another offering, this time a "tongue in cheek" letter from Leo Blair to the yet-unborn baby of Gordon and Sarah Brown.

24 July: Jessica "Polly Filler" Davies of the *Times* is first out of the traps with this year's ghastly-husbands-on-holiday feature. On her recent vacation in Majorca, "I believed that my overworked banker husband and I would get some time together. The first indication that I was wrong came when I saw the laptop computer wedged between our bags… Is it a man thing, this inability to leave work behind?"

26 July: Under the portentous headline "A Requiem for British Humour", David Thomas and his chum Mitchell Symons fill the entire op-ed page of the *Mail* with old gags. (Sample: "Do you know the punishment for bigamy? Two mothers-in-law.") They claim to be doing this "in the interests of social anthropology… so that future generations will know what, for hundreds of years, made the British laugh." Oh yeah.

29 July: Time for another old favourite. "At last it's here!" Leslie Thomas chirrups in the *Mail on Sunday*. "Summer! English (oh, all right, British) summer!… What a shame we cannot try to save some of this weather for a rainy day."

2 August: "Blazing sunshine greeted my return from a wonderful holiday abroad," Rupert Christiansen reveals in the *Daily Telegraph*. But his spirits droop when he gets home: litterbugs drop crisp wrappers on the pavement, and youngsters eat doughnuts in the street (which was considered "a bit off" when Rupert was a boy). He concludes that the country's gone to the dogs.

3 August: Brilliant *Mail*man Quentin Letts asks: "Is Cherie trying to be the new Diana?" Here's the evidence: Cherie was photographed with "a black girl" at a Unicef launch, and Diana was once photographed with a darkish-skinned boy during a visit to India. QED, eh?

4 August: In the *Guardian*, Alexander Chancellor chides the PM for his flashiness: "Mr Blair's idea of a perfect summer holiday is to stay with his family in an agreeable house in Tuscany or the south of France." Unlike the proletarian columnist, who reveals that "I am on holiday at the moment, by the sea in south Dorset". Can this by any chance be the same Alexander Chancellor who has spent years regaling readers with news of his own Tuscan villa?

5 August: The first sighting of yet another seasonal stalwart. "I hate the sun," Barbara Ellen announces in the *Observer*. "Summer, to me, is a clammy catastrophe, a nightmarish trauma… I like to rant about this." And she duly does, for the rest of the page.

7 August: The *Sun*'s gorblimey specialist Richard Littlejohn is in cheerful mood. "One of the small joys of taking a foreign holiday is picking up a hire car," he twitters, going into raptures about "the part of Florida where I take my holidays". But soon it's back to business as usual, with a rant against the Blairs. "A week in Mexico would be enough for most people. But not for our self-styled First Family. When they return from South America they're off to the West Country…" Who do they bleedin' think they are – *Sun* columnists?

8 August: A huge feature by Hannah Betts in the *Times* claims that this will be "the summer of Bob" – the Bob in question being Robert Burton, author of that vast 17th-century tome *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. And for why? Because Alain de Botton has chosen it as his beach read. "Roll over Tony Parsons, Zadie Smith et al; this summer it will be Burton who is dancing off the airport shelves."

9 August: The hearts of *Daily Mail* executives leap at the news that Jade Jagger has been photographed naked "enjoying something more than a kiss and a cuddle with a mystery man on a beach in Ibiza". A massive 2600-worder is instantly prepared, posing the question that nobody (*shurely everybody? Ed.*) is asking: "Would you make love alfresco?"

11 August: If all else fails, simply copy somebody else's space-filler. "I would like to add my voice to that of the journalist Rupert Christiansen, who wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* last week on the subject of litter," Alexander Chancellor declares in the *Guardian*. "The country is crowded with holidaymakers depositing their detritus along the highways and byways."

12 August: The inexhaustible David Thomas surfaces in the *Sunday Telegraph*. "No one goes to the beach to paddle any more," he writes, realising that absurd generalisations are *de rigueur* in silly-season pieces. "Everyone these days, from toddlers to grandparents, is clad in a wetsuit, board under their arm… According to the British Surfing Association's national director, Colin Wilson, 47, there are now more than 100,000 active surfers in this country." Which, in a country with a population of about 60 million, clearly counts as "everyone".

13 August: Charles Moore's old schoolfriend Nicholas Coleridge delivers his annual piece for the *Daily Telegraph*. "I am always amazed by the number of people who actively dislike taking holidays," he writes. "I speak as someone who adores holidays. I am never happier than when on holiday…" And so on, for an epic 1,700 words. In the *Daily Mail*, Peter McKay notes that "the Hamilton story perks up the dull days of August" – and then does his best to perk them down again by devoting a lengthy item to his pet pooch. "Why do dogs – or collie/labrador mongrels such as my own Tia (of the August Moon) – run after sticks?" he wonders.

14 August: "With August upon us, Britons are leaving in droves for their summer holidays," Diana Appleyard reports in the *Daily Mail*. The *Mail* is so startled by the news that it conducts a series of hard-hitting interviews asking holidaymakers why they do it. "My firm belief is that travel broadens the mind," reveals Avril Hewlitt, 38, of Buckinghamshire. "For me the attraction is that I have a chance to relax and sunbathe," adds Theresa Reeves, 40, of Berkshire. Over in the *Telegraph*, however, there is a sudden eruption of Holiday Rage. "I was so enraged by Nicholas Coleridge's lengthy paean to upscale vacationing in this newspaper yesterday that I ripped out his grinning picture and shoved it in a drawer," Vicki Woods writes. "People who don't take three full weeks in front of sunkissed beach views are 'bad planners', Coleridge says blithely, 'petty, insecure and disorganised, with limited intellectual curiosity'. He didn't mention means among their limitations. How about limited means, you smug tomnoddy? I've had five days' bicycling in France so far, and a bank holiday weekend in Whitstable to come." Oh dear. Is the *Telegraph* not paying her enough?

"Someone stole the tarts – so we arrested the butler"

TECHNOLOGY

IT IS always nice when two friends get engaged, and who could think of a pair better suited to one another than the *Eye's* old chums Electronic Data Systems (EDS) and the company formerly known as the Post Office, Consignia?

On 7 August Consignia announced that it has selected EDS as the preferred supplier to run its new banking services, the highlight of which is the new automatic credit transfer, allowing people on income support to collect their benefits using a smart card, and sounding the death knell for thousands of rural post offices. On such a happy occasion it would be churlish to mention EDS's pisspoor record when it comes to benefits payments.

The IT firm's management of the housing benefits and council tax systems in two south London boroughs proved so disastrous that Wandsworth council sacked EDS in 1998, while in nearby Kingston EDS's contract was terminated after council rent arrears hit nearly £1.18m and the firm sent out 1,400 letters wrongly accusing recipients of housing benefit fraud.

Under a 10-year contract with the department of social security, EDS also runs the computer system for the benefits agency. In January 2000, a cock-up with this system led to 112,000 income support claimants receiving double their weekly entitlement at a cost of £10.5m.

Apparently, however, Consignia, having already frittered away money on its undistinguished new logo, is perfectly happy to test the concept of for richer for poorer, for better for worse, to its limits.

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EDUCATION

READERS of the *Daily Mail* will be disappointed to learn that the staunchly middle class rag's links with private education have suffered a double blow.

On 7 August arch-rival the *Express* reported that the husband and wife caretaker and housekeeper team at Bellerbys College, Cambridge, a private education institution owned by Study Group International, which is owned in turn by the Daily Mail and General Trust, are to have their jobs downgraded and their salaries cut by £4,000. The pair, who have worked at the college for five years, are so upset they have taken sick leave with stress.

It has since emerged that a sister school, Bellerbys College in Wadhurst, East Sussex, is to close entirely because of the failure of the boarding school to attract sufficient numbers of overseas pupils. Apparently the Harry Potter-effect has failed to work its magic on the Harmsworth fortunes.

THE inflammatory comments of the former head of the Welsh Language Board and adviser to the National Assembly, John Elfed Jones, who has compared English incomers to a second form of foot and mouth disease, have been widely taken to refer to the sort of middle-class English people who buy second homes in Wales.

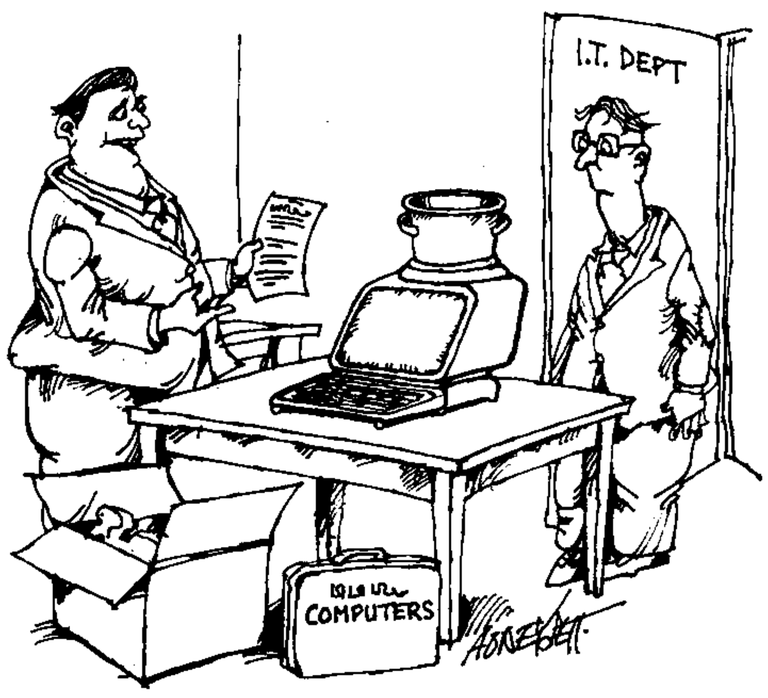
The CRE is investigating an article by Elfed Jones in *Barn* magazine, in which he says: "Setting foot into Welsh communities means, more often than not, that house prices rise exponentially so that local people cannot afford to buy property."

But the politically correct CRE should bear in mind that Elfed Jones, the former head of HTV and "fat cat" chairman of Welsh Water who together with his fellow directors made £20m from privatisation, is not merely targeting the English moneyed classes. He and other conservative Welsh nationalists are horrified by the increasing trend of Liverpool and Manchester city councils to buy up cheap properties in Welsh villages and offload their problem families from inner city housing estates. If they came out and said this in the open, however, not just the CRE, but the left wing of their own party who would be taking them to task.

HENRY McLEISH, the late Donald Dewar's successor as Scotland's first minister, has been cementing his reputation as one of the masters of "new" Labour bollocks.

He seized on the slim peg of an announcement by BT last week that it will be spending £10.5m in the next year updating internet links and telephone exchanges in Glasgow to weave an elaborate fantasy about Clydeside becoming a world financial centre to rival London, Frankfurt and New York. The modest BT investment, plus hundreds of millions of pounds worth of property development which hasn't happened yet, would "keep Glasgow in the premier division of European financial success", he said. Hundreds of top financial companies worldwide were seeking new bases. Some of them, er, might well relocate in Glasgow, creating thousands of jobs.

Then again, they might not. On the day McMitty announced his grand plan for Wall St on Clyde, it was reported that 10,000 jobs have been lost in Scottish manufacturing in the two years since, as "enterprise minister", he announced his "strategy to deliver jobs and prosperity to the Scottish economy". From brewing to mobile phones, from arms to shipbuilding and textiles to computers, Scottish employers have been shedding



"A lot of schools are buying this model, it has a built-in bucket to catch drips from the ceiling"

IMMIGRANTS TO BE TAUGHT ENGLISH

jobs by the bucketload because of the worldwide economic slowdown – and McBollocks has been able to do nothing about it. Recent figures show that more new projects fail in Scotland than in any other part of Britain, and more new projects fail in Glasgow than in any other part of Scotland.

Two sectors *are* doing well, however, according to another report. Numbers of those advising on business start-ups and working in PR in Glasgow – ie in the bullshit industry – are rising. It must warm the first minister's heart.

AFTER making 700 workers redundant from its factory in Erskine, Scotland, earlier this year, computer firm Compaq announced a further 1,500 job cuts across its global operations on 11 July.

Kate Winn, Compaq's PR manager in the UK, was quick to state that there would be no further job losses north of the border and that redundancies would be kept to a minimum in the UK in general. Ms Winn's reassuring words were surely unconnected to a speech by the leader of the House of Commons, Robin Cook, delivered just a few days earlier on 5 July?

In his speech Cook commended to the house a new scheme to provide all MPs with a personal computer and laptop, provided centrally by the grand-sounding parliamentary communications directorate. His commendation was not well-received by the MP for mid-Worcestershire, Peter Luff, who complained that the government procurement of the computer equipment had not been conducted openly, and that consequently a major computer company in his own constituency, evesham.com, along with many other UK companies, had been excluded from bidding for the contract.

The high and mighty Mr Cook pooh-poohed this suggestion: "I hear what the hon gentleman says and I am sure that his constituents have heard it also," he mocked. "I assure the House that the arrangement has been made through standard public procurement rules, albeit by a process of negotiation, not necessarily open tender." And which lucky IT firm obtained this lucrative contract by means of "negotiation"? Step forward... Compaq.

CIVIL servants should be more careful about where they do their sensitive homework.

One treasury official who spread out his laptop and papers in the first class carriage of the eight o'clock Salisbury to London Waterloo was overseen by a member of the public working on what looked like top secret documents concerning foot and mouth compensation.

The gist of the treasury-headed memo, as read from upside-down, appeared to be that while compensation for farmers is at present awarded automatically, in future this will change so that only those cases which are "designated" will be reimbursed for their losses.

Privatisers on Parade

The Think Tank

'NEW' Labour's drive to privatise public services has been heavily influenced by the Institute for Public Policy Research's "commission on public private partnerships", which reported shortly after the general election. The IPPR is usually referred to as the "left-leaning think tank", which is indeed how it began in the days of "old" Labour and John Smith. Yet the composition of its commission, its links with government and the commercial sector, and the way it carried out its "inquiry" into PPP, suggest it is anything but left-leaning.

More accurately the IPPR is heavily pro-business and an advocate of privatisation. Much of its work is sponsored by the commercial sector. Its director is Matthew Taylor, son of Laurie Taylor and a former Millbank apparatchik, who is regularly wheeled out as a "dispassionate "commentator" on *Newsnight*.

The commission carried out its inquiry behind closed doors and the proceedings were not made available except to its private sponsors and to sympathetic government ministers. With market analysts estimating that expanding trade in public services could make the private sector £30bn in extra revenue a year, the work of the commission and its influence in Downing Street are extremely important. The same analysts estimate that of the £30bn, some £10bn is made up from central government contracts, £5bn in education and another £5bn in local authority contracts.

In a separate report prepared for a think tank which *can* make the claim of being left-leaning – Catalyst – Professor Alyson Pollock from University College London examined the composition of the IPPR special commission. She found "a striking coalition between big business and government. Commission members who have direct links into many of the key government departments." Here are some of the "relationships" Prof Pollock and her colleagues uncovered.

- The commission chair is **Martin Taylor** – chairman of WH Smith and an adviser to Goldman Sachs. Within weeks of Labour taking office in 1997, chancellor Gordon Brown charged him with heading the government's taskforce to "reform" the tax and benefits system. His less than illustrious period spent closing down swathes of branches while at Barclays is glossed over.
- **David Denison** of ICL develops the company's "relationships" with local government and represents the CBI on the DETR "best value steering group".
- **Chris Nicholson** is a partner at KPMG, advising on privatisation and private finance initiative (PFI) financing.
- **Shriti Vadera** is the treasury's "expert" behind the planned part privatisation of the London Underground. She is also a member of the NHS "capital and capacity taskforce". This innocuous sounding organisation investigates ways of opening NHS clinical support services to, er, privatisation. Vadera also worked on the privatisation team at investment bank Warburg Dillon Read.
- **John Smith** is the BBC's director of finance, property and business affairs. He helped introduce the Birtite BBC internal market, from which Auntie has never fully recovered.
- **Prof Gerry Stoker** is chair of the New Local Government Network (NLGN), a "new" Labour front organisation which advocates the "modernisation", or rather, privatisation of remaining locally provided services. The NLGN is supported by, among others, KPMG, the CBI, ICL, BT and Capita.
- **Claire Perry**, as chief executive of Bromley health authority, pushed through a highly controversial PFI deal for Bromley hospital. By sheer coincidence she is chair of the New Health Network (NHN), yet another Labour front organisation which advocates the "modernisation", or privatisation, of health services. The NHN, which shouldn't be confused with the NLGN, is supported by, among others, Superdrug, Westminster Healthcare and the ever generous and publicly spirited KPMG.
- **Peter Fanning** of 4PS and **Richard Footitt** from the DETR co-authored a paper on the "standard documentation for PFI contracts". 4PS is a consultancy set up to help local authorities develop PFI and PPP schemes.

The commission's working parties were assisted by the services of one solitary trade unionist – **Jack Dromey** – long-term partner of Harriet Harman. Dromey has travelled far from the often violent Grunwick picket lines of the 1970s. As a senior T&G official he of course opposes the wholesale sell-off of public services; but ever the realist he accepts that outsourcing, privatisation, PPP and PFI "are here to stay".

The Lobbyists

AS opposition to the government's public sector privatisation plans grow, the firms making money out of PPPs have decided to fight back in the propaganda war through the "PPP Forum". It is financed by leading privatisers, including the Royal Bank of Scotland and Halifax; operators like Laing, WS Atkins and Amec; and lawyers – who draw up the massive privatisation contracts – like Clifford Chance.

All the forum's efforts are focused on lobbying the Labour party. And its first move has been to appoint a new lobbying firm, Bell Pottinger, which has put one Howard Dawber, failed Labour candidate for Cheadle, in charge of the account.

Readers may recall Dawber writing to the *Eye* to complain about the suggestion that his candidacy showed how the Labour party was now the Lobby party. Dawber denied he was a businessman's hired gun, and promised that if elected he would stand "for the people, not the powerful". Learning of his new job lobbying for the PFI on behalf of big business, the *Eye* contacted Dawber to ask if he were not now standing up for the powerful, rather than the people. Dawber ruefully told the *Eye*: "When we're not MPs, we all work for companies who are powerful."

PPP Forum switched to Bell Pottinger after cancelling its contract with another lobbying firm, GPC. It gave up on GPC because it had lost its Labour-connected account handlers. Joy Johnson, formerly Labour campaigns director, and Cathy McGlynn, a former special adviser to Labour's Jack Cunningham, both left GPC where they had been running the PPP Forum account. McGlynn has stepped in to become temporary director of the PPP Forum itself.

Howard Dawber explained that the single-minded focus of the privatising lobby on Labour-connected lobbyists was just one of the "realities of politics". The forum claims it will spread the privatisation message by "using the example of schemes that are already operational" to "remind people of the benefits of PPP as a whole".

Sadly, the forum's database of completed projects is full of wild inaccuracies. It claims that the immigration service computerisation was carried out successfully by EDS. In fact the contract was won by Siemens, whose system failed and was abandoned. PPP Forum also believes that Siemens' passport office contracts, which led to an early crisis for the PFI and raised the cost of passports, were shining examples of success "minimising processing fluctuation" and saving millions.

Mysteriously, one of the biggest and worst PPP schemes, Andersen's NIRS2 national insurance project, is not included in the forum's database. Asked about these errors, Cathy McGlynn argues that the forum's data is no more partisan than reports prepared by Unison.

PS: Joy Johnson left GPC to become Ken Livingstone's communications officer at the Greater London Assembly. At GPC she represented the PPP Forum, who lobbied *for* the tube privatisation, arguing that "with a project the size of the Tube involving over £11bn of investment, it makes good business sense for the taxpayer to transfer the substantial performance, cost and delivery risk of the modernisation programme to world class railway suppliers, contractors and project managers and their financial backers who have both the human and financial resources to undertake the project".

She now represents Ken Livingstone, who believes exactly the opposite.

PPS: Bell Pottinger believes the forum's campaign should target "doubters" in the Labour party. A carefully selected group has thus just received an invitation to a "champagne reception" in the Presidential Suite of the Grand Hotel in Brighton, on the Tuesday of Labour's annual conference.

The Civil Servants

THE latest report of the advisory committee on business appointments – the group rubber stamps (*scrutinises, shurely?*) the move of civil servants into the private sector – shows how "new" Labour's love of PFIs and PPPs can transform the life of even the dullest mandarin.

Alan Langlands, for example, the former NHS chief executive, was well known for his vigorous defence of the PFI hospital sell-offs. In 1999 and 2000 he defended the PFI against criticism from MPs on the health select committee. He told Durham MP Gerry Steinberg in no uncertain terms that his criticism of PFI did not "stack up" and said that awarding a PFI contract was a "hard headed business decision".

Langlands resigned from the NHS last summer and this April made his own hard-headed business decision: to join a PFI hospital consortium. He is now a consultant and member of the advisory board of Catalyst, the private outfit now making a mess of Calderdale General Hospital (see *Eyes passim*).

Catalyst, comprising the Bank of Scotland and Bovis, is also in charge of the Worcester Hospital PFI scheme, a plan whose impact on the Midlands NHS led to the staggering general election victory of independent anti-PFI candidate Dr Richard Taylor.

Langlands has also become a director of Patientline, a private firm which supplies those expensive hospital bedside combined telephone and television sets to squeeze cash out of the bored but bed-bound. The government's support for Patientline – it would like to see the company's gizmo next to every hospital bed – has encouraged the company to float on the stock market. The civil service advisory committee passed both appointments with "unconditional approval".

Other civil servants following the "public private partnership" road include senior transport and environment civil servant **Christopher Brearly,** who has taken a job advising on rail franchise bids for Laing.

The advisory committee did at least agonise over this appointment, delaying it by a couple of months and making Brearley promise to reapply to the committee if he wanted to work on any other of Laing's wide-ranging privatisation and PFI contracts.

However, the committee offered "unconditional approval" to education department civil servant **R. Dawe,** who has a new job with KPMG. Dawe is to offer "strategic support on further and higher education issues" to a firm which already sells expensive "consultancy" to the government on higher education. Dawe's appointment suggests further education may see the kind of full-blown privatisation already seen in primary and secondary schooling.

ITV

The Premiership (ITV)
Career Reshuffles (BBC/Channel 4)

AT the end of every football season the sports pages run a competition for "worst buy of the season": the player transferred at a high price who has proved to be better at getting his cheques in the bank than the ball in the net. TV has had many of its own equivalents: the transfers of Vanessa Feltz from ITV to BBC and Philip Schofield in the opposite direction attracted especial derision from the terraces. But, appropriately, it looks as if the worst buy of the 2001-2002 schedules will turn out to be football itself.

Scheduling Premiership football at 7pm peak-time — and therefore excluding almost all female viewers — is one of the biggest gambles in broadcasting history. The first edition of **The Premiership** suggested it will fail.

For those used to watching football highlights on the BBC, the first main change was the absence of an on-screen clock showing how much of the match has elapsed. It soon became clear why this was: the footage from each game is so short that any countdown would look like the final scenes in a nuclear thriller.

This was partly because of a ratings-nervous attempt to include as many items as possible in the first programme on the basis of something for everyone, but was exacerbated by the need to cram in advertisements. There's a natural tendency to assume that ITV programmes look like they do because of artistic calculation, but there's a useful reminder here that it's often a practical matter of finding space for the pay-masters.

The other new feature permitted by the timing — live interviews with the day's participants — also quickly revealed a weakness. Because the away team will tend to be travelling back by 7pm, these items will often have to rely on home-team personnel, whatever the result.

The ITV commentary team also showed few signs of matching the virtually mythological Motty and Barry Davies at the BBC. Peter Drury used the cliché "sailing close to the wind" at the beginning and end of one sentence. New boy Jon Champion, an import from Auntie, favours a kind of middle-class rap which distracts from the action. "Bramble ruminating, Phillips hoping to be fulminating", he mystifyingly remarked of one penalty incident. A short film about Ravenelli of Derby's favourite pasta chef would have been fine in a pre-game set-up show, but here merely emphasised how little action there was.

Ratings of 4.2 million for the first programme will cause panic at ITV. The massive publicity seems to have done nothing to alter what many believe to be the fact that the audience for bog-standard Saturday highlights is a maximum 4-5 million. By screening the main show as early as 7pm, ITV is even reducing its pool of potential viewers further. Many football lovers are still travelling back from matches at that time. If it's another season in which Manchester United settle the title by Christmas, expect Des to be back in a familiar 10.30pm or so slot by next spring.

But — even if Bolton were to beat Manchester United 6-0 — no football contest screened by ITV this autumn could match for passion and Machiavellian tactics the behind-the-screens competitions taking place at both the BBC and Channel 4 in the next few weeks. The trophies are the jobs of the departing BBC chairman Sir Christopher Bland and the Channel 4 chief executive Michael Jackson.

In a historic development, the field to be chief of the BBC includes for the first time two candidates who understand television instinctively, have worked in it all their lives, have no direct connection with the government of the day and would be perfectly qualified to fill the post: David Dimbleby and Michael Grade.

Unfortunately, close study of the British appointments system suggests that obvious suitability has traditionally been a handicap. For this reason the Blairites' candidate — Baroness Jay — and the Brownites' man — Gavyn Davies — remain more likely to be favoured. The field is completed by Heather Rabbats, but she is assumed to have been listed largely for reasons of cosmetic progressiveness.

The problem for Greg Dyke is that none of the known candidates seems likely to support his increasingly open desire to make BBC1 and BBC2 as ratings-driven as possible while shunting the pointy-head stuff on to the two new digital dump channels he prays Tessa Jowell will allow him. For several years the DG-chairman relationship has been an LWT old pals' act — Birt/Bland and Dyke/Bland. Michael Grade's the only South Bank alumnus in this field but, at both the BBC and Channel 4, he stood up for the public service stuff. For the first time since the 80s, it's possible that the chairman may be more than the DG's rubber-stamp. Staff are praying for Dimbleby or Grade. Virtual civil disobedience is planned if it's Jay.

If the BBC field looks unusually rich, there's a worrying poverty about the post-Jacko jockeying at C4 after Non-Wacko's decision to add American experience to the CV he will one day present to the BBC governors as they seek a new DG.

Tim Gardam, the strongest internal candidate at C4, may find it more comfortable to wait until the post comes up next time. Dawn "Scarey" Airey from Channel 5 is hungry for it but would be a huge gamble at what is now a multi-channel network: would the board really be drawn to someone who has kept C5 bouyant largely by screening soft-porn? Mark Thompson, likely to fight out the BBC's top job with Jackson in four years' time, may be judged too licence fee for an increasingly commercial concern. Don't rule out a Kenneth Clarke-style run by the BBC's Alan Yentob, a defeated candidate last time. Even more worrying for Channel 4 is that it may be facing a BBC with a chairman who actually knows about TV.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

THE growing number of news agencies banned from entering Zimbabwe, including the BBC and ITN, are increasingly relying on brave, poorly-paid or even volunteer camera operators who smuggle out footage of president Robert Mugabe's war against Zimbabweans, both black and white.

Most recently Rageh Omaar introduced such material from his vantage point in Johannesburg for the BBC *Six*, announcing that he'd obtained "exclusive footage" of the persecution of white farmers (14 August).

Four hours later Fiona Bruce told viewers of the BBC *Ten* that it also "had been given exclusive footage" from Zimbabwe – footage that turned out to be almost identical to Omaar's.

Over on ITN, meanwhile, Kirsty Young had her own dramatic scoop: "ITV News has obtained dramatic footage of the trouble in Zimbabwe" – film that despite a fearless commentary from Tim Ewart was once again outstandingly familiar.

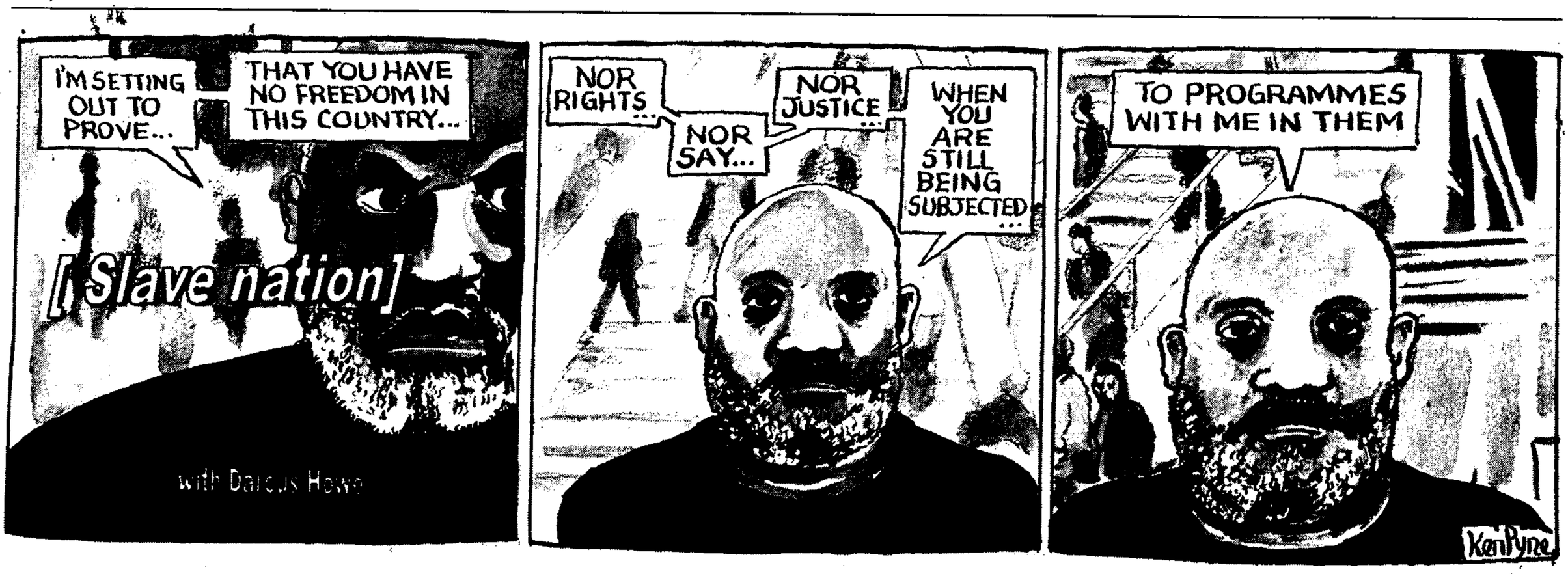
Those Glossy Adverts For Eastenders – Everybody's Talking About Them

Fiona Shaw's electrifying central performance captures all the emotions and ambiguitities of this witty and intelligent woman. *Grauniad*

IN THE end it was a great story, which meant that our last day at Elstree ended on a real high": so said *News Room South East* programme editor Quentin Smith, recalling the night a terrorist bomb went off in Ealing.

This sophisticated enthusiasm explains why his pisspoor programme devoted so much time to the story – all those pointless live updates, not to mention the dozens of re-runs of the clip showing the moment when the thing went off.

All this, of course, will have been welcomed by the bombers themselves, who know that the publicity generated by one bomb on the mainland is worth ten back in Belfast.



DUMB BRITAIN

Number One, C4

Krishnan Guru-Murthy: Which sculptor was born the son of a miner in Castleford, West Yorks?

Contestant: Barbara Hepworth.

Steve Wright Show, R2

Wright: What is the Italian word for motorway?

Contestant: Expresso.

Grant Stott Show, Radio Forth

Stott: Who is the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party?

Contestant: Geri Halliwell.

The Weakest Link, BBC1

Anne Robinson: In science, what is botany the study of?

Caroline O'Shea (of *Big Brother* fame): Bottoms.

And a last hurrah for Richard and Judy and *This Morning* on ITV

Richard Madeley (hilarious French accent): Ze Moulin Rouge! In what ceety can you find zis famoos night club, hee-haw hee-haw?

Contestant: Italy.

ANDREW "Brillo Pad" Neill is back where he feels most comfortable – with his snout pressed firmly between the cheeks of his old boss Rupert Murdoch.

Brillo's 3,000-word article on the Dirty Digger in the *New Statesman* two weeks ago was a vintage piece of *arslikhan*. Drawing on his trusty collection of old hacks' clichés, he compared the Murdoch family saga to "a glitzy soap opera", snuffled enthusiastically about Lachlan Murdoch's upcoming "landmark" 30th birthday – which "will trigger new speculation" about the succession – and respectfully neglected to mention young Lachie's colossal embarrassments in Australia (see recent *Eyes passim*).

Then came the really serious slurping. Rupert, according to Brillo, is "a perpetual-motion machine" (not a reference to terminal diarrhoea, one trusts) who starts his eighth decade "in better shape then ever". Having effected a "breathtaking Houdini-style escape" from the shares slump of the nineties, he has achieved box-office glory with *Planet of the Apes* and is now about to receive "the big enchilada" – DirecTV, America's biggest satellite company, which will complete his global pay-tv network.

As ever, Brillo's timing was impeccable. No sooner had he announced Rupert's acquisition of "the big enchilada" as a dead cert than the Digger's pay-tv rival Charlie Ergen of EchoStar launched a rival $32.3bn bid for DirecTV. If Murdoch is to prevail he will be obliged to raise his bid, thus plunging News Corp even deeper into debt. And he will have to convince the US regulatory authorities that DirecTV wouldn't give him a monopoly.

Now comes further confirmation that Brillo Pad's sycophantic gush may have been slightly overstated. News Corp's results for the latest fiscal quarter, announced by Murdoch last week, include $410m in write-offs on dud investments – including One.Tel (the doomed Australian telecom company over which Lachlan presided), a Canadian optical network provider, an Indian cable network and News Corp's unsuccessful venture capital business ePartners. With his newspapers also suffering a 25 percent fall in advertising revenue, the overall result for the quarter was a net *loss* of $265m.

THE PC brigade is delighted that Heather Rabbatts, former chief executive of Lambeth council, is the fifth shortlisted candidate to take over from Sir Christopher "Pigling" Bland as the £82,000-a-year chairman of the BBC. If she is appointed she would be both the first female chairman at the corporation (*shurely "chairperson"? Ed.*), and the first from an ethnic minority.

Ms Rabbatts' track record at Lambeth gives some idea of what she has to offer the Beeb, where she already sits on the board of governors. When she arrived at the council in 1995 the audit commission deemed it the worst performing local authority in the UK out of 442. She promised staff would see a difference in three months, and the public in six (*Eye 875*). What staff actually saw was the disappearance of thousands of jobs as services were contracted to private companies including Crapita (*Eye 991*). After her five years at the helm, the audit commission decided Lambeth's performance had improved to, er, second worst in the country (*Eye 1006*).

If Pigling, now chairman of BT, has any say in the appointment, Ms Rabbatts might not be his first choice. He was furious when earlier this month a consortium called Earth Lease made an £8bn bid for BT's "local loop" business, which it is determined to pursue even though Bland turned down the offer immediately. One member of Earth Lease who has promised to use her BBC connections to further the bid is, er, Heather Rabbatts.

"You're a laugh a minute, Bob, that's not enough"

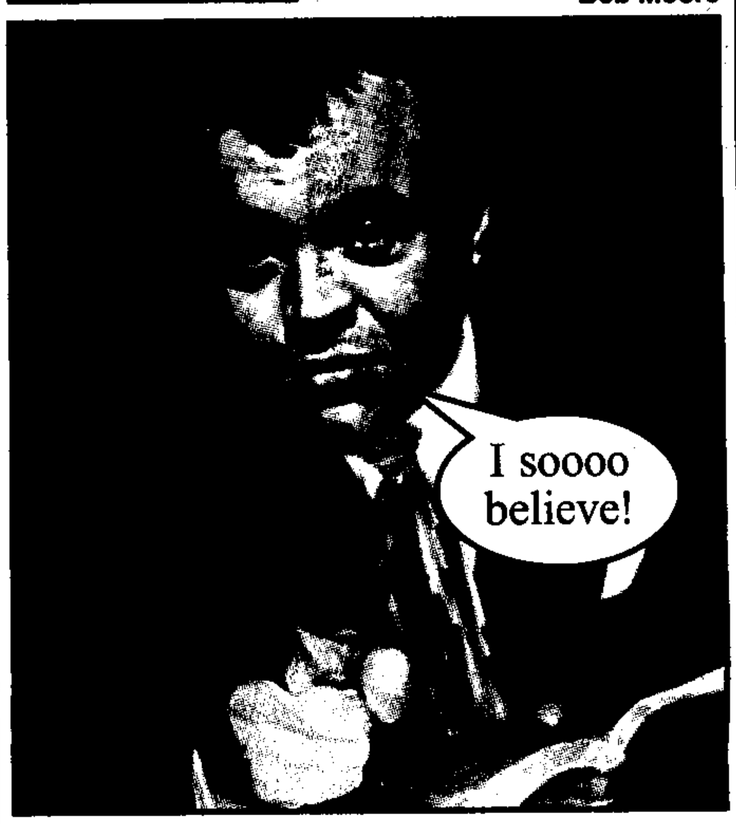
ONE of the handful of unfortunate BBC journalists hurt while reporting the riots at the G8 summit in Genoa was, er, BBC safety officer John Fillingham.

Shortly before Fillingham was hit on the head with a CS gas canister, he was spotted ticking off BBC news producer Darius Bazargan, whom he accused of looking too much like a protester because he was wearing a Palestinian head scarf to blend in with the crowd.

Unfortunately for Fillingham, his own official appearance – he was brandishing his BBC press pass – was not sufficient to ward off the wrath of the carabinieri.

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Billy Graham Norton

THE international press completely failed to pick up on a Reuters report that some of the Italian police involved in violent clashes with protesters at the G8 summit in Genoa were trained by Los Angeles police department, a force best-known for the brutal beating of black motorist Rodney King in 1992.

The report, filed in Rome and based on an article in the Italian Communist daily newspaper, *Liberazione*, alleged that an "elite unit" comprising 70 special Italian officers was trained by two LA police sheriffs. A police source told the paper that the week-long course was "more like a military boot camp".

THE effect of the massive belt-tightening initiative over at BBC World Service is beginning to be felt by programme makers.

The tightest budget to date (unless anyone from Bush knows better) is the one given to the makers of a 12-part series about the world's refugees. Uniquely, there's no money at all for any travel – not even a cab fare. So the programme-makers are currently raiding the archives for enough sound to hide the inevitable "studio feel" of their production.

O·B·N·K

Did you know that there are only four years between Madonna, the Princess of Pop, and Cherie, the Diva of Downing Street?

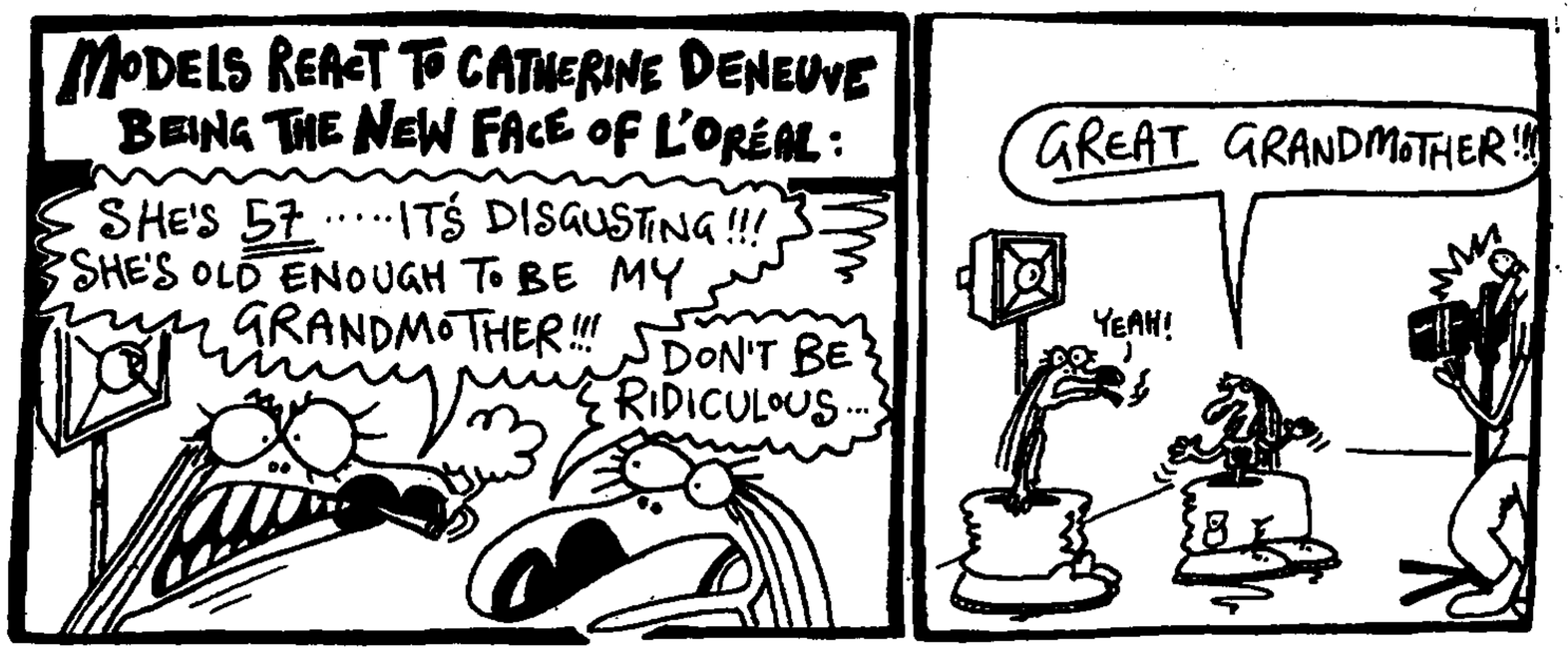
LAUREN BOOTH
New Statesman

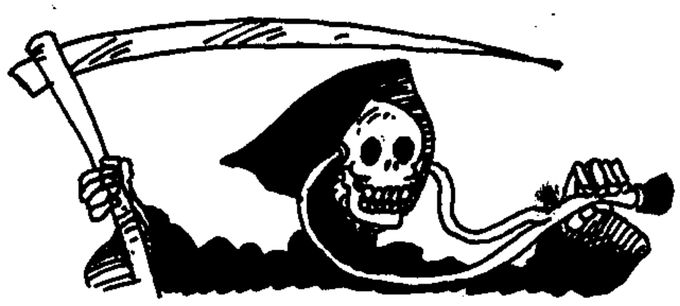
Nominated by R. Ewing

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


MODELS REACT TO CATHERINE DENEUVE BEING THE NEW FACE OF L'ORÉAL:
SHE'S 57 ..... IT'S DISGUSTING!!! SHE'S OLD ENOUGH TO BE MY GRANDMOTHER!!!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS...
GREAT GRANDMOTHER!!!
YEAH!



DOING THE ROUNDS

ONE of the more challenging recommendations of the Bristol inquiry report is that NHS services should be obliged to meet defined standards for safety, quality of care, staffing levels, adequacy of buildings and equipment, and strength of leadership. What's more, inquiry chairman Ian Kennedy announced that "hospitals which do not meet these standards should not be able to offer services within the NHS".

This seems to chime with "new" Labour's promise of a "modern dependable NHS" in which there's "no room for second best". But responding to the report, health secretary Alan Milburn completely ignored this key recommendation that could place half the health service under threat.

Doctors are now obliged by the General Medical Council (GMC) to raise concerns about any service or individual that places patients at unacceptable risk. But when you've been desensitised by years of overwork in an under-funded, ramshackle NHS, very few people can be bothered to blow the whistle. Those who do are still frightened of being demonised.

In the last fortnight M.D. has heard of concerns about a heart surgeon in the Midlands and a gut surgeon in the south-east. Both whistleblowers preferred to go through the *Eye* rather than their own hospital management. Both complaints are now being looked into, but in the current system there's no guarantee any problems will be sorted out.

Take Hinchingbrooke hospital in Huntingdon. Concerns about the obstetric and gynaecological services there were first raised publicly in 1999 when Cambridge health authority decided to transfer local gynaecological cancer services to Addenbrooke's hospital in Cambridge. Consultant Eftis Paraskevaides spoke out against the decision; but last August he "agreed to stop practising" at Hinchingbrooke when the trust said "some questions were raised by a recent audit of gynaecological cancer services which need to be resolved". A year later and Mr Paraskevaides is still on gardening leave. There has been no public resolution of the concerns he raised, or the concerns raised about him. Many patients believe he's been persecuted.

In January 2000 an audit "raised a number of key issues regarding staffing and clinical management in obstetric services" and another audit in January 2001 "raised issues and expressed concerns". This finally led to an external assessment of the department which was published last month. Of the January 2000 audit, it found "no evidence that any of the issues raised had been considered in a systematic manner". It also found "there is no current plan to audit compliance with the newly-developed protocols within obstetrics and gynaecology". The report found a lack of leadership, an absence of middle grade doctors, a significant shortage of experienced midwives, a great pressure on existing midwives, a delay in introducing new ways of working, few opportunities for staff to refresh and maintain skills, lack of a systematic and coherent approach to monitoring and improving standards of care and poor communication within the department and between hospital and community.

In Ian Kennedy's NHS, it would be given six months to get its act together or be kicked out. But at present there is no sign that anyone will be revisiting the hospital to make sure it's up to scratch.

One notable absence from the Hinchingbrooke* report is any evidence that patients have suffered, simply because it wasn't looked for. There is still neither the will nor the mechanism to pick up clinical errors in the NHS unless, as happened in Bristol, individual patients join together to unearth a pattern of substandard care for themselves.

M.D.

* A website for Hinchingbrooke patients who wish to share their experiences is at www.sirencare.co.uk

ROAD RAGE

THE experiment of allowing eight police forces to use speeding fines to cover the cost of extra speed cameras is thought to have saved more than 100 lives and cut the number of deaths and serious injuries at camera sites by 47 percent. Yet the increasing use of speed cameras is still resisted.

The fact that it's an offence to exceed speed limits seems to have escaped the *Sun*, *Daily Mail*, and the rest of the knee-jerk string-'em-up brigade. They and the road lobby demanded speed cameras must not be hidden in such a way as to catch people breaking the law.

The government meekly complied, instructing police to notify the public of each speed camera. Transport minister John Spellar advised motorists to "heed the signs and slow down when they see cameras". Of course drivers would only need to slow down if they were breaking the speed limit in the first place. So as well as admitting the shortcomings of publicised speed cameras, the transport minister effectively encouraged motorists to break the law wherever there are no speed cameras.

When did the police last notify burglars of the areas they were patrolling? Burglars rarely kill but road accidents claim about 3,400 lives each year, and inappropriate speed is often a factor.

Spellar's decision to give speed cameras maximum publicity flies in the face of a study by his own department in 1999 which recommended "a policy of reducing the visibility of roadside camera installations be introduced" – because "undermining drivers' confidence in knowing the location of fixed-site cameras may reduce manipulating and encourage more uniform lower speeds".

Speeding fines are obviously imposed as deterrents, but the road lobby and media say they are backdoor revenue raisers. Fines for other offences are considered just desserts, not stealth taxes; but the media have successfully portrayed speeding drivers as hapless victims. As a result the cowering Blairites say cameras should be used only at accident blackspots. Prohibition of cameras in areas not considered blackspots could encourage even more speeding there.

The unique treatment of safety and law on the roads arises because the government is scared of "motorists". But who are these "motorists", and why didn't they vote out Labour in June following speed-camera trials and hikes in fuel prices? The AA and RAC campaign against speed limit enforcement but never ask the opinions of their members – who pay for breakdown cover, not political lobbying. The transport department's 1999 study of nearly 7,000 drivers found that most "were favourable to cameras".

The mythical "motorist" who cares little for the immense human grief caused by road accidents is flagged up repeatedly in almost all national newspapers and often on local radio.

On 11 August, the *Daily Mail* exploded with outrage because a speeding motorist who killed an 11-year-old pedestrian had been fined "just £1,000" – but three days later the same newspaper vented its fury on speed cameras. Motoring organisations had reacted with "horror" to news of the latest increase in law enforcement, said the *Mail* under the front-page headline: "Drivers face a triple whammy."

If a new drug or treatment were available that reduced deaths and illnesses by 47 percent, the *Mail* and others would demand its immediate introduction by all NHS trusts. But the government has permitted just four more police forces to provide extra speed cameras using fines revenue.

'Hedgehog'

DOWN ON THE FARM

THE price of farmland rose to its highest level ever in the quarter to June. A sick joke? Not at all: the gravity-defying course of land values has been the talk of gleeful land agents throughout four years of farming nightmares.

The apparent immunity to income collapse is unlike the 1930s agricultural depression when land could be bought for shillings or rented for pennies. This unexpected phenomenon is partly down to the wealth of the nation. The City of London on its own generates enough income in a single week – £0.45bn – to buy all the farmland that comes up for sale in a year. The wish to own land, together with rollover relief that still encourages land purchase as tax avoidance, provide powerful competition for land from outside.

But more than half of farmland sales are to farmers, who more than ever, as an agent said recently, are "hungry for land". Not many years ago 300 arable acres was a good living; today 1,000 acres is marginal and a Kent farmer reports that his 2,000 acres is insufficient for himself and his father. Two thousand acres! Three square miles of countryside, supplying the calories for 20,000 people, can now only support one family.

This ridiculous situation is beloved of men like Ben Gill, leader of the National Farmers' Union and public enemy No1; Sean Rickard, the agricultural economist who knows the price of everything; and Lord Haskins of the new rural task force, who as a food magnate naturally wants his bulk raw materials as cheap as possible. The wolves are now truly in charge of the flock.

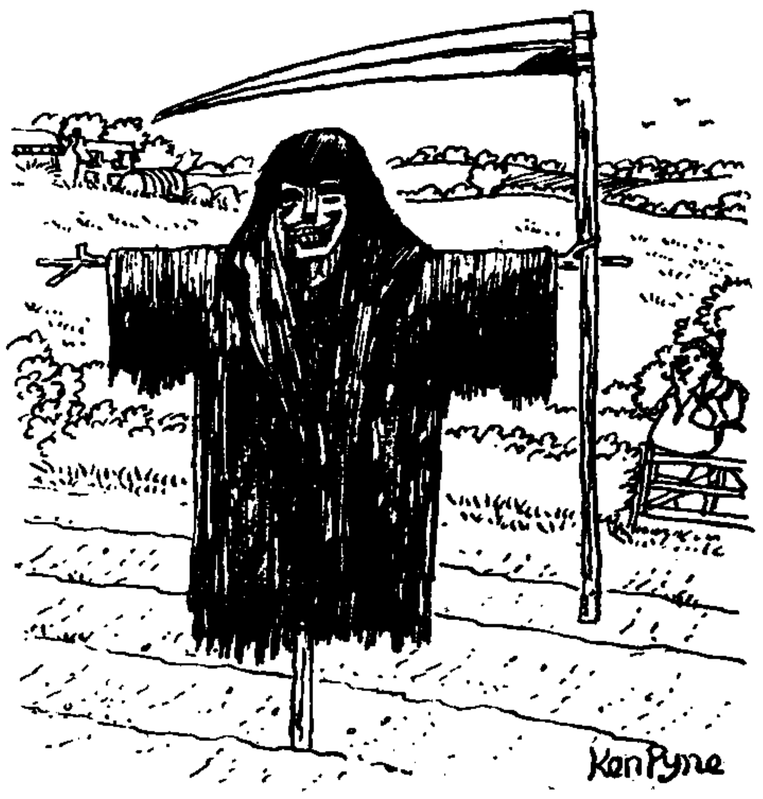
In livestock areas the process has not gone as far, but the story is the same. It is not one of industry collapse, bankruptcy and regression, but the more insidious monster of "restructuring". All those who can no longer make any income and have no chance of expanding are quietly giving up. But there is no flood of cheap farms or tenancies as there was when their grandfathers started: all is gobbled up by big, land-hungry neighbours who are manically building empires of owned, rented or share-farmed land.

Does it matter? We were privileged recently to hear Sir Simon Gourlay, a past president of the NFU, who claimed that big farms (he has one) were really better because they would clear away the "cluttered landscape" of small fields and provide better views (he did that).

In fact it does matter: even leaving aside the many arguments about the environment, animal welfare and especially rural infrastructure, it matters deeply to the thousands leaving a way of life, and almost as much to the thousands who aspired to farm and now never will. Land and animal husbandry are deep-rooted human instincts; only a small number of those who want to farm ever could, but now only the seriously rich can get in.

There is a Malthusian obtuseness about the free trade agenda which is destroying family farms: it is "unfortunate but inevitable." But why? Does the nation really want 100,000 more people who do real, satisfying and useful jobs to be cast out so as to knock a penny off a box of CrispySugary CocoFlakes?

'Gumboot'



ROTTEN BOROUGHS

TOKIN' SUPPORT

FORMER squatters' leader Lord "Steve" Bassam, shuffled out of his junior home office minister's job to be a whip in the Lords, has turned his ambitions back to his former stomping ground of Brighton and Hove. He reckons the new "city" needs an all-powerful elected mayor – and no prizes for guessing who he thinks is the best man for the job. To this end "Smokin' " Steve has circulated a confidential "discussion" document among his cronies, outlining his strategy for persuading B&H residents to vote in favour of a directly-elected mayor in a referendum in October.

Trouble is, the former council leader may find it more difficult than he imagined to promote the idea. Rebel Labour councillors excluded from the magic circle are growing in strength and courage, while the city's people would prefer an open committee system after experiencing the secretive behaviour of "new" Labour under the present "cabinet" which landed the city with notorious contracts such as those with dud refuse collector Sita and dodgy developer Citygrove (*Eyes passim*).

Bassam's document says the city needs a "headbanger in chief" to implement various bollocky buzz-phrases such as "strategic partnerships" and "earned autonomy". He assumes the support of the local press for the Yes campaign will be easily won: "The *Argus* will go for it and the rest of the local news media will follow on." Open committees must be attacked as "backward-looking Victoriana"; environmentalists can be attracted by "some visionary ideas" [unspecified]; and of course "gay communities, ethnic groups and community organisations" must, patronisingly, be made to feel included. Optimistically, perhaps, he hopes to win the support of one "Ken Livingston" (*sic*), who has a home in Brighton — perhaps forgetting that Ken's speciality is upsetting Blair, not toadying to him.

● RITA DAVIES, head of Newham council's "social regeneration" (formerly anti-poverty) unit in the chief executive's department, has herself been cushioned against poverty with an £11,000 payrise, backdated one year. This puts her on around £55,000 and is the second piece of recent good news for Rita. Earlier this year she became engaged to her live-in boyfriend, Dave Burbage, who also works for the Labour council — as chief executive. Congrats to both!

PECKHAM WHY?

A CLASSIC case of shooting the messenger emerges in the south London borough of Southwark, where the Peckham Partnership's Tenants and Residents Forum (TRF), part of a venture to improve housing on the run-down North Peckham estate (where 10-year-old Damilola Taylor was killed last year) has been reported to the district auditor for financial irregularities which could have seen as much as £365,000 misappropriated.

Problems started in April after council monitoring officer Ervine Okuboh submitted a report into whether the TRF, funded jointly by Southwark's regeneration budget and the European social fund, was spending the money it received for the purpose intended. Having examined the accounts Okuboh concluded that he could not authorise any further payments to the forum until basic financial systems were put in place. Four weeks later Okuboh was relieved from his monitoring role and given other duties until earlier this month, when he was suspended.

The district auditor has yet to conclude his investigation into Okuboh's claims of wrongdoing and other aspects of the multi-million pound Peckham partnership. Meanwhile an employment tribunal claim on Okuboh's behalf has been registered by his union, Unison, on the grounds that he should not be victimised for doing what he is paid for — protecting the public purse.

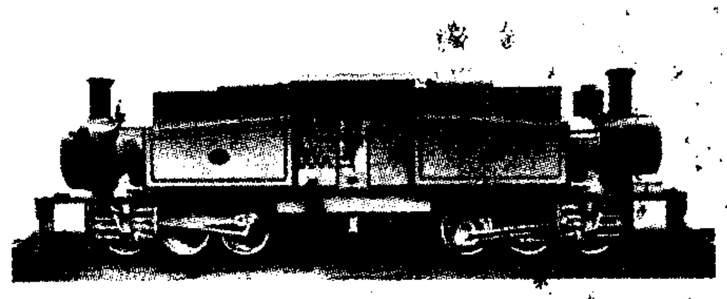
● PITY the mayor of Evesham, Mark Robinson, who – in the line of duty — ended up with a broken arm after attending a lap-dancing venue on a "fact-finding" visit and then becoming involved in a pub brawl. Robinson, a Tory, and Mike Worrall, a Labour member of Wychavon district council, went to the lap-dancing show at Evesham's Railway Hotel as "observers" to, ah, "ensure that it was meeting the conditions of its licence". After concluding that "everything was above board" they repaired to the Royal Oak pub for a well-earned nightcap. Alas Cllr Robinson was then confronted by a man who was apparently unhappy about having had a planning application turned down. In the course of trying to subdue the excited elector, Cllr Robinson somehow broke his arm. Who says councillors don't earn their allowances?

LOO WITH A VIEW

CONCERNS have been voiced for years in Richmond-upon-Thames about the Lib Dem council's habit of flogging off juicy properties to developers for far less than they are apparently worth (*Eye* 1034). Now the council has gone one better — it is giving away a prime riverside property estimated to be worth up to £13m.

The site of the old Twickenham swimming baths, an acre-and-a-half of prime Thames frontage facing Eel Pie Island, is to be handed to developers Dawnay Day Structured Finance for 125 years at a peppercorn rent of £1 a year. Fifty luxury flats, a health club, car parking, shops and a cinema will go up on the site. But don't forget the £6m-worth of "community gain" goodies locals will get in return, the council tells objectors. Such as? Er, some new toilets, an alleyway through a shopfront to the riverside, limited entry rights at unsocial hours to the development's £1m private leisure pool and vague "environmental enhancements".

● VIRTUE, they say, is its own reward, but who would begrudge former Durham county councillor Ron Morrissey the title of "honorary alderman" bestowed on him by his grateful former colleagues last week? Before retiring in June Cllr Morrissey, former agent for Durham city MP Gerry Steinberg, had 20 years' distinguished service on the Labour council. It was marred only by a little unpleasantness last year when he agreed to repay £45,000 to the local Christ's Hospital old folks' charity, where he had been chairman of governors, after being sued by the Charity Commission (*Eye* 996). The high court heard how Morrissey and the hospital's former master, the Rev Graham Pattison, had piled £700,000 of the charity's money into a failed holiday complex on the Costa del Sol and had used other money on cars and pension funds for themselves and their wives. Still, that's all in the past now, Mr Alderman Sir!



SIGNAL FAILURES

TRAIN fares in Britain have to be high to help rail businesses afford all the back-slapping conferences, seminars and exhibitions they attend. Next month, for example, prices for a two-day rail shindig in London range from £1,291 to £2,522 per person.

What will delegates get for that? According to conference publicity, a number of operators – including Connex, First North Western, Virgin Trains, Railtrack and the strategic rail authority (SRA) – will pontificate on how they "have delivered first class performance and reliability". The conference is a chance to "benchmark against Europe's top 10 performers".

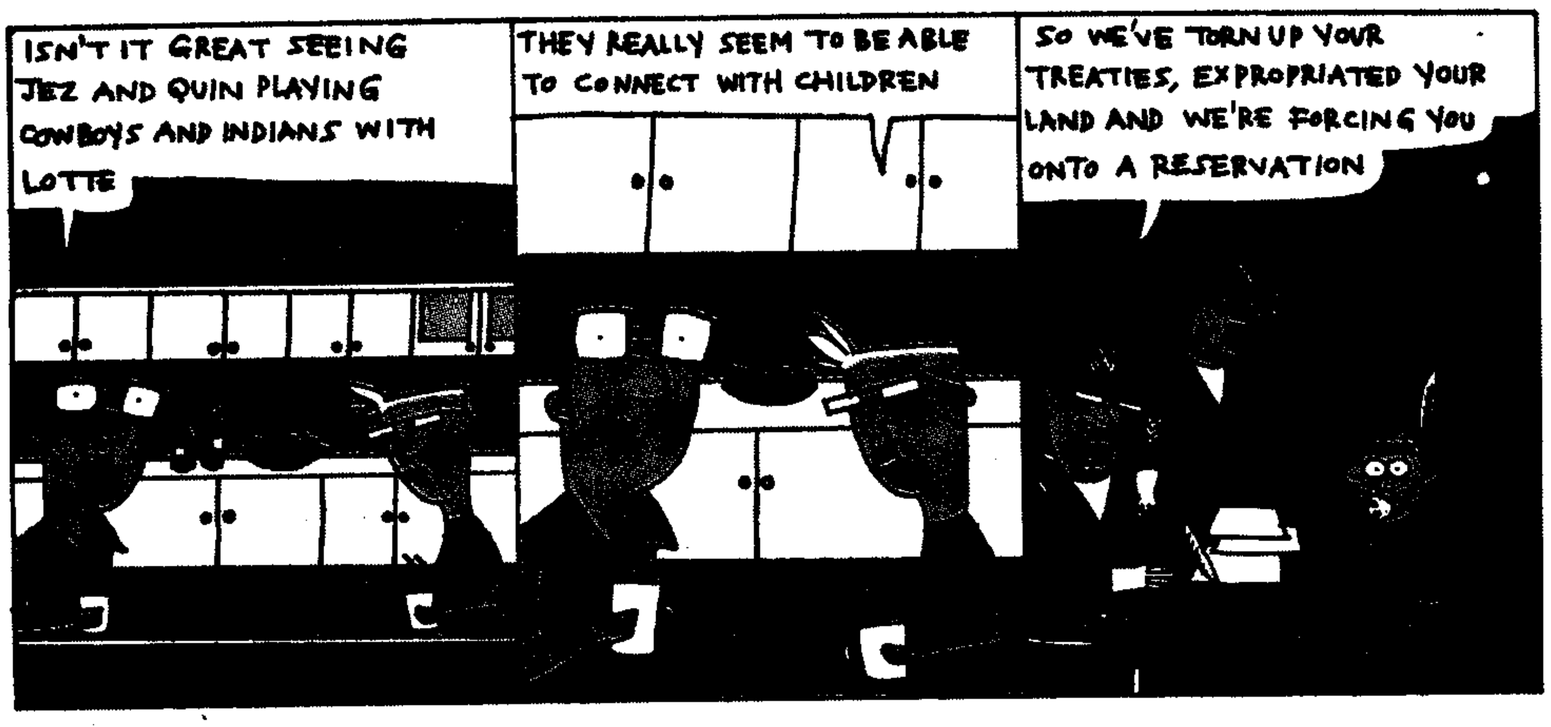
Why anyone would want to pay to hear how Connex managed only 85 percent peak-time punctuality in the last quarter on its south eastern franchise (Connex south central was even worse) is a mystery. As it is to hear that one in every five First North Western services was delayed. In the last quarter 58 percent of Virgin west coast trains were punctual and just 54 percent of Virgin cross-country services – confirming Virgin's preeminence as Britain's worst performer – as opposed to one of "Europe's top 10".

Conference organiser IQPC must have forgotten that Railtrack has caused the worst crisis of performance and reliability in the entire history of British railways. And what can the SRA – which has produced no passenger strategy and thrown the rail industry into unprecedented confusion – teach delegates about first class performance? Nothing much. Instead its speaker will talk about "creating a safety culture within operations" – even though responsibility for safety rests with several other bodies but not the SRA.

'Dr B. Ching'

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


ISN'T IT GREAT SEEING JEZ AND QUIN PLAYING COWBOYS AND INDIANS WITH LOTTE
THEY REALLY SEEM TO BE ABLE TO CONNECT WITH CHILDREN
SO WE'VE TORN UP YOUR TREATIES, EXPROPRIATED YOUR LAND AND WE'RE FORCING YOU ONTO A RESERVATION

NOOKS and CORNERS

IN 1945 Weetwood House in Eccleshall and its grounds were bought by Sheffield Corporation for "the enjoyment of the people of Sheffield".

The solid, handsome if undistinguished stone house was originally built in 1858 as Eccleshall College. The corporation made the house into Eccleshall Library and opened the gardens as a park.

In 1992 this branch library was closed after Sheffield city council, by now Labour-controlled, claimed that £130,000 worth of repairs were urgently needed even though an independent surveyor reported that there was no danger to the public and necessary repairs would cost no more than £15,000. In 1995 Weetwood House was sold for £500,000 and opened as a pub the following year. In 1998 it reopened as a pub and restaurant called, imaginatively, "The Old Library".

In 1999 the Liberal Democrats took control of Sheffield city council and promised a new branch library in Eccleshall. Two years later the Old Library restaurant closed and the building and its site were sold to Maud & Hewitt, developers. Meanwhile the Lib Dems have been pursuing their favourite policy of allowing the development of flats on every available site.

Now the council wants to build flats in the grounds of Weetwood House to enable the commitment to build a new library to be fulfilled. Although no planning application has yet been submitted, it was revealed at a public meeting that Messrs Maud & Hewitt propose to build 50-60 flats plus a small library building, although this will involve the demolition of "The Old Library", aka poor old (unlisted) Weetwood House. A Lib-Dem councillor announced that this would be "probably the best deal in the circumstances" — the circumstances being the bankruptcy of the council (financial, that is, as well as moral) inherited from Labour.

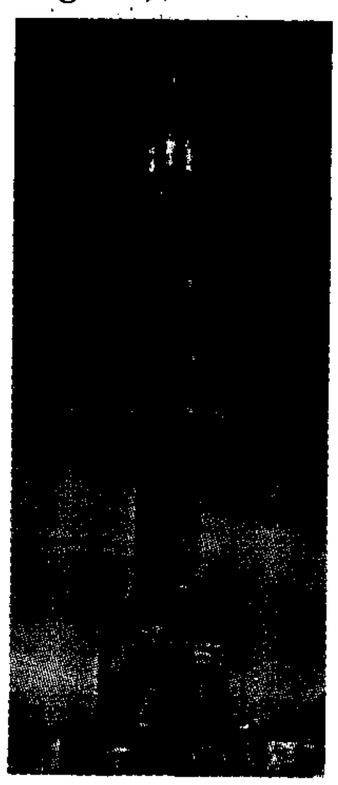
If this goes through, the council will have succeeded in not only destroying a decent old building but overdeveloping land acquired "for the enjoyment of the people of Sheffield" just to reopen a branch library which should never have been closed in the first place.

MY PICTURE shows another victim of local government indifference and philistinism. It is the Nelson Monument at Great Yarmouth, raised in 1817-19, and a magnificent thing it is.

Designed by William Wilkins, architect of Downing College, the National Gallery in London and the Nelson Pillar in Dublin, it is 144ft high — only a foot shorter than the inferior Nelson Column erected in Trafalgar Square two decades later.

Above a plinth bearing the names of Nelson's victories, a Greek Doric column rises to support a drum on which free-standing figures of Victory holding wreaths stand carrying a tremendous statue of Britannia. The Victories were originally of Coade stone but were later replaced by concrete replicas which were themselves replaced by fibreglass women in a restoration completed as recently as 1984.

You might think such a thing would be the pride and joy of Great Yarmouth, but no. Once a flourishing medieval port, Yarmouth is now despoiled by atrocious post-war rebuilding and depressed. It has the largest parish church in England, but that is shut most of the time. The Nelson Monument once stood in the middle of a racecourse on a tongue of land owned by the Admiralty between the river and the sea; the racecourse moved and now it is surrounded by mean and squalid industrial sheds.



A few years ago it was possible to ascend the column; not now. It is closed and, worse, fenced off with plastic tape adorned with notices from Norfolk county council announcing that the structure is dangerous. Is this the way to treat a monument to Britain's greatest naval hero and, surely, the finest triumphal column in the country?

OF COURSE if the column were in the care of the Ashmolean Museum, it would be surrounded by giant flagpoles carrying gaudy banners helpfully saying "Nelson Monument". That is what is going to happen to the magnificent public building by C.R. Cockerell in Oxford.

I have already described the various attempts by the thrusting new director, Christopher Black/Green/Brown, to spoil what many think is one of the greatest Classical buildings in Britain [Eyes passim ad nauseam]. Thwarted in his aim of spoiling the great Ionic portico with hanging banners, he now wants to have four 25ft flagpoles erected along Beaumont Street.

Oxford's planning committee has accepted Christopher Mauve's preposterous assertion that visitors are unaware that this noble grade I building is open to the public. So, instead of a notice on the boundary wall, perhaps saying "Ashmolean Museum" and stating opening hours, the architecture is to be hidden by banners which "will make it more welcoming".

A meeting of the committee in January 2000 was attended by none other than Sir Jocelyn Stevens, the then chairman of English Heritage, who gave "enthusiastic support" to the proposal — overruling the advice of officers and English Heritage's expert advisory committee. That's the way things are done in Britain.

'Piloti'

I-SPY *Thailand*

NO DIVING

Submitted by Chris Heard. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Down on the Fish Farm

WHILE Scottish Executive (SE) mandarins duck the issue of the link between fish farm filth and the extinction of wild salmon, Norway acts.

In June its government announced plans to declare 39 river systems and 22 fjords no-go areas for aquaculture: "...to protect against the negative impact of fish farming to a selected range of the most important wild salmon populations," said Norway's environment minister.

There are 1,000 factory fish farms in Norway from which 500,000 fake salmon escape annually, competing with wild species for food and spreading disease. Norwegian farms are plagued by the fish-killer disease infectious salmon anemia, which, allegedly, Norway exported to Scotland.

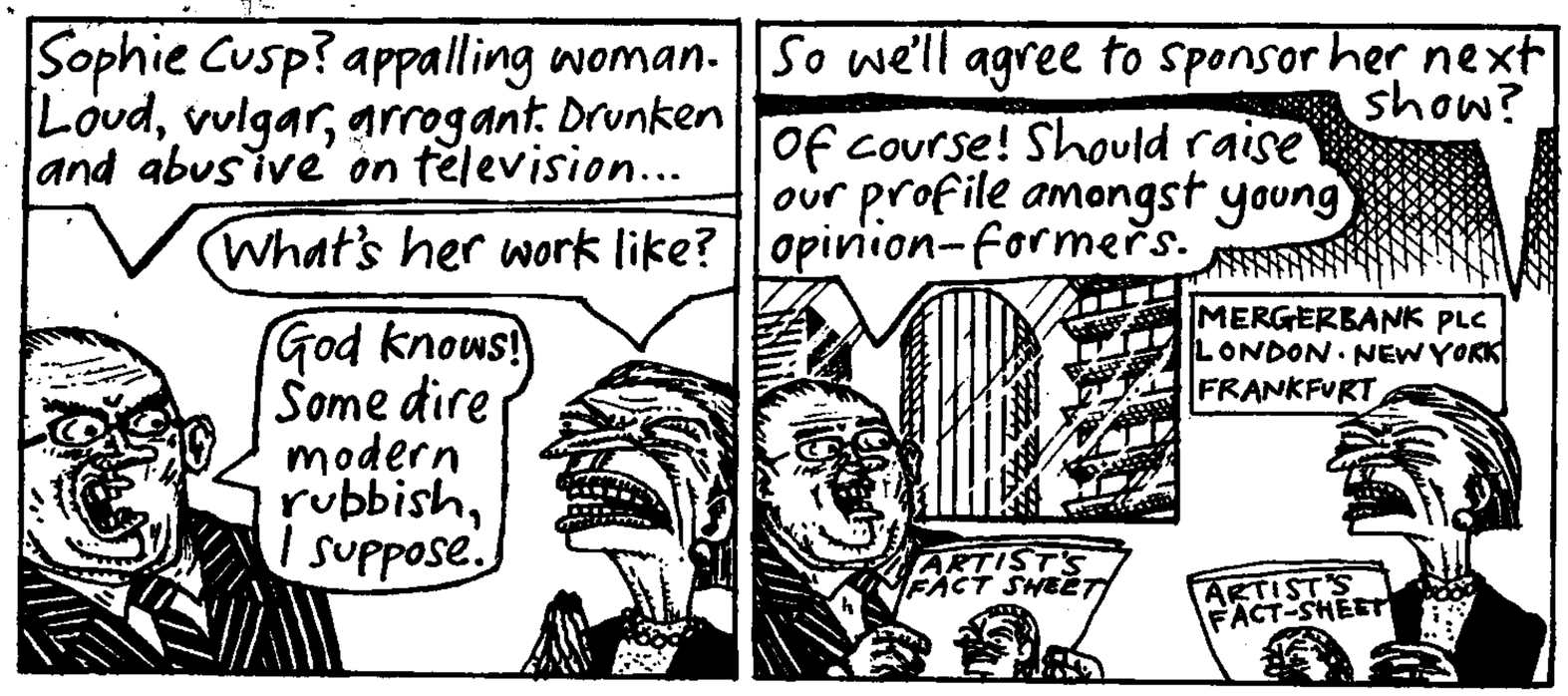
Norwegian salmon farm cages are blighted by billions of fish-eating sea-lice, while toxic algal blooms blossom in polluted coastal waters adjacent to fish farms. Gyrodactalus salaris – a parasitic present introduced to Norwegian waters from the Baltic by fish farmers – has wiped out entire wild salmon populations in more than 40 Norwegian rivers; and, so far, this parasite has resisted all eradication efforts, including mass-poisoning of whole river systems.

Meanwhile, Seap (the Scottish environment pollution agency) has delivered a scientific report on the impact of factory salmon farming in the most intensively farmed sea loch in Europe, Loch Roag in the Outer Hebrides.

Each year, the loch produces upwards of two million fake salmon. But Seap claims untreated sewage from these fish does not terminally harm the marine environment.

'Old Trout'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS BY BIRCH


Sophie Cusp? appalling woman. Loud, vulgar, arrogant. Drunken and abusive on television...
What's her work like?
God knows! Some dire modern rubbish, I suppose.
So we'll agree to sponsor her next show?
Of course! Should raise our profile amongst young opinion-formers.
MERGERBANK PLC
LONDON · NEW YORK
FRANKFURT
ARTIST'S FACT SHEET
ARTIST'S FACT-SHEET

EYE TOLD YOU SO

WHEN a chilling photograph of bodies laid out in a makeshift mortuary in the Chapel of Rest at Bedfordshire Hospital was splashed across the national press in January, the *Eye* was the first to suggest the corpses might have been tampered with by someone who was angry with the management to make them look more gruesome.

An investigation on behalf of the coroner by Ralph Miller, a retired policeman, now confirms the *Eye*'s suggestion but does not say who was responsible. He does say, however, that at the time of the security breach relations between managers and porters at the hospital were poor.

Since then, three permanent night porters have taken voluntary redundancy. One declined to be interviewed by Miller and the others ignored him.

Whoever was responsible for tampering with the bodies, it's highly unlikely the regional NHS executive or health secretary Alan Milburn will rush to give the hospital's former chief executive Ken Williams his job back. He had to fall on his sword as soon as the nightmarish picture was published.

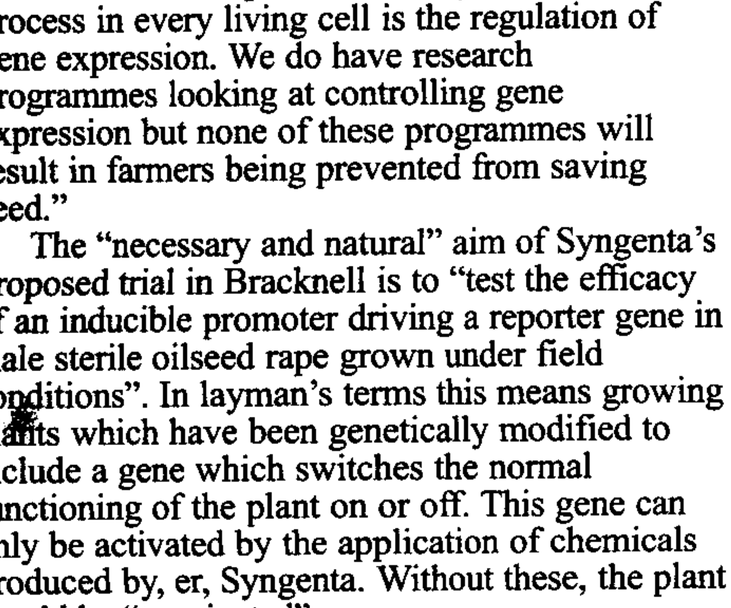
THE external relations manager of Syngenta, the world's largest manufacturer of agricultural chemicals, has written to the *Eye* deeply hurt by our suggestion that the company has broken its 1999 pledge not to develop: "Any system that would stop farmers growing second-generation seed".

The *Eye* alleged that Syngenta has applied to the department for the environment, food and rural affairs (DEFRA) for permission to test a terminator gene, which kills genetically modified plants after just one year's crop, at its international research centre at Jealott's Hill in Bracknell, Berkshire.

Dr Ian Weatherhead writes: "Syngenta has a long-standing policy not to use the so-called 'terminator' technology that prevents seed germination in crops. A necessary and natural process in every living cell is the regulation of gene expression. We do have research programmes looking at controlling gene expression but none of these programmes will result in farmers being prevented from saving seed."

The "necessary and natural" aim of Syngenta's proposed trial in Bracknell is to "test the efficacy of an inducible promoter driving a reporter gene in male sterile oilseed rape grown under field conditions". In layman's terms this means growing plants which have been genetically modified to include a gene which switches the normal functioning of the plant on or off. This gene can only be activated by the application of chemicals produced by, er, Syngenta. Without these, the plant would be "terminated".

Dr Weatherhead assures the *Eye*: "Syngenta is keen to see that biotechnology is used to bring benefits to farmers and consumers around the world and, as such, we would not seek to produce a product that did not offer farmers genuine value and benefit." In his next letter, perhaps he would like to explain what possible "value and benefit" farmers can reap from purchasing a crop that can only be grown with the artificial addition of chemicals bought from the same company at even greater expense.



"We have a very middle-class catchment area"

Letters

Private Eye

Arch fan

Sir,

On Thursday 19 July I visited my father in Ward F22 of the University Hospital Nottingham shortly after he had been informed of the four-year sentence passed on the world's greatest charlatan. It was a joy to behold; he had the biggest beaming smile on his face. A reader for 30 years his first words to me were "Is there a Private Eye?" Sadly he did not live to see the next cover.

I wonder by chance whether you know the current whereabouts of Lord Archer, whose humorous escapades occasionally grace the pages of your journal, as I want to thank him personally for this unintentional kindness. Alternatively perhaps I could thank him through your columns for bringing such a moment of happiness to an old man's last few days.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN JUDD,

Bramcote, Notts.

Cover girl

Sir,

Well I never thought I would see a time when Private Eye would pander to the modern trend much beloved by so-called lifestyle magazines. Namely that of plastering titillating pictures of scantily dressed minor celebrities in provocative clothing on the front of magazines to attract readers.

The picture of Cherie Blair, wet and clad in see-through PVC, will grab the attention of certain individuals, who then, when they have purchased the magazine, will be hugely disappointed to find no further revelations inside. I scoured my copy for hours hoping for a glimpse of something more promising with no success. If I had a subscription I would cancel forthwith, I am reduced to buying my copies from WH Smug.

Yours,
LES BROWN,

Chesterfield.

Zapper zapped

Sir,

I can't believe I'm hearin' this! "EastEnders is quite good". (Eye TV, 1034). EastEnders and all the other representatives of this miserable "genre", is the reason ordinary people are denied decent TV drama. All the money and prime time slots are being misappropriated to produce more and more grey porridge television for people who don't matter – the poor sods who pay the licence fee. The most sickening piece of hypocrisy in all this is that people like The Zapper can afford to be all ironic and Post Modern about EastEnders because they have the money to escape to the theatre whenever they feel like it. Many people only watch soaps because there is nothing else available. They are hungry for drama, but they are given visual slurry.

The most disturbing thing about The Zapper's apparent approval of EastEnders, is that it might be the first sign of the Eye succumbing to the pseudo populism found in the rest of the media. As ex-public schoolboys and Oxbridge graduates, it is your duty to sneer at popular "culture" from a lofty and detached position. What is the point of a massively privileged upbringing if individuals like The Zapper are not "completely out of step with the mood of the nation".

Yours sincerely,
FRANKLIN B. LEE.

Via email.

Attention span

Sir,

My attention has been drawn to the fact that anyone who addresses an editor with the phrase "My attention has been drawn..." is a pompous prat. If the implication is supposed to be that the writer is far too grand to bother with said editor's lowly rag himself, the effect is one of ludicrous self-importance. Is it a coincidence that the two correspondents who kicked off with this formula in your last issue are both MPs?

Yours faithfully,
MARK HEARNE,

Oxford.

Labouring the point

Sir,

Good to see Charles Clarke being so punctilious about what he did and did not do (Letters, Eye 1034). May we ask then: Did he know that the Labour party chairman is elected? Did he ever stand for such an election? Did he accept a titular post knowing it was unconstitutional to do so? Did he know that being "appointed" Labour party chairman gets right up the noses of thousands of Labour party members and supporters who loathe pompous and insensitive vanity in those who are in parliament only thanks to the efforts of millions of men and women who struggled for a century to enshrine democracy into the structure and behaviour of Labour at all levels? Did he give a toss about any of this?

IAN FLINTOFF,
Labour Party Member, London SW6.

Lookalike

Bogeyman **Clarke**

Sir,

Isn't there a disconcerting resemblance between New Labour minister Charles Clarke and Fungus The Bogeyman – and which is scarier?

RODDY MURRAY,

Isle of Lewis.

House in order

Sir,

I would like to correct your imaginative piece on housing stock transfer (Housey, housey, 10 August) and your reference to Willow Park Housing Trust.

For the record Willow Park has finance in place to carry out all of the improvements promised to tenants at the time of transfer. In fact, we plan to complete more improvements than originally intended in our first five years.

There is no police investigation at Willow Park. We also do not form part of the "private sector". Registered social landlords are independent organisations regulated by the Housing Corporation, and many (like Willow Park) are registered charities. Tenants form the largest group on our board of management.

Stock transfer has proved to be a huge success by improving living conditions for hundreds of thousands of people living in some of our most deprived areas. The funding market is healthy, and an increasing number of tenants are voting to change their landlord.

Yours sincerely,
MERVYN JONES,

Chief Executive, Willow Park Housing Trust.

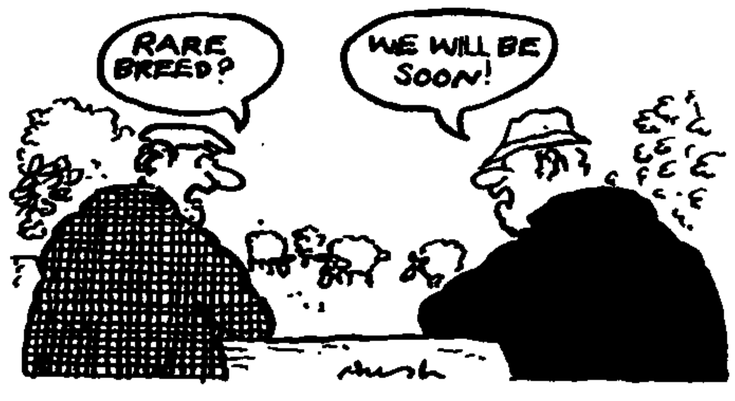
Alternative comedian

Sir,

This alternative line to your cartoon (Eye 1034) may be just as apt, regretfully.

ROBIN ASHBY,

Via e-mail.



Watt's funny?

Sir,

I was shocked at the ignorance displayed in the cartoon in which a tattooed gentleman asks "Arresting me? What's the charge?" and a police officer holding a stun gun replies "About 200 volts" (Eye 1034). Surely you must know that volts measure electric potential. To be scientifically correct, the policeman should reply "About 200 coulombs". Either that, or the thug would have to ask "What's the potential difference?"

Unfortunately, neither of these possibilities would appear to be very funny.

Yours in a spirit of rectification,
DAVID LINDLEY,

Charlbury, Oxon.

MARGARET BRAZIER,
Chair, Retained Organs Commission,
Hannibal House,
Elephant & Castle, SE1 6TE.

The Times

Nursing: a grievance

Sir,

The craze to replace council homes with private care homes is because councils cannot afford to bring their homes up to the standard required of the private sector – odd when you consider that care in a council home is at least £120 a week more than in the private sector (and of course if you have the savings or a house to sell that is what you pay).

Residential homes do not provide nursing, and nurses employed by the home would not be allowed to practise as nurses, all nursing being done by district nurses.

The craze to replace hospital beds at £1,200 per week, which is far too much to spend on old people who are no longer productive, has saved a fortune for successive governments. The answer is to buy care in the independent sector for £336 per week, which to save you the bother of working it out is £2 per hour for round-the-clock nursing care. This does not go very far when a nurse costs more than ten quid an hour, but hey, we're saving the NHS money to spend on office managers so it has to be a good thing.

Part of the NHS nursing crisis is because 25 percent of trained nurses in this country already work in the private sector. Whatever keeps them here, it ain't the salary. Maybe nursing homes are nicer places to work.

Of course, if you gave us a decent rate for the job, say for example as much as it costs, then the problem would be solved. We would get all the nurses we need from the NHS because we could pay a decent rate. Then all overseas nurses could go into the NHS where they would be safe from exploitation, prejudice and mistreatment which as we all know only occurs where the folding stuff changes hands.

Regards,
ANDREW MAKIN,

Yorkshire branch secretary, Registered Nursing Home Association.

String 'em up

Sir,

The question regarding how many strings a guitar has (Dumb Britain, Eye 1034) has many answers.

A bass guitar does indeed have four strings, some have five.

An electric guitar has six strings and more rarely seven.

Acoustic guitars can have six or twelve strings.

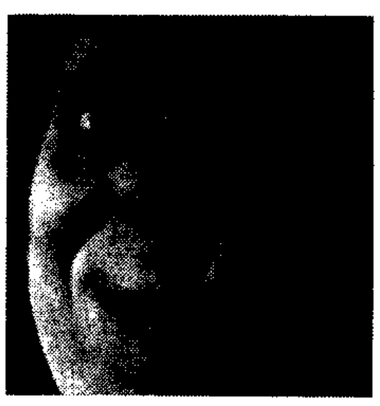
Unless specified in the question all of the above numbers would constitute a correct answer.

Kind regards,
JULIE OWENS,

Malvern, Worcs.

Lookalike

Shrek



Danny

Sir,

Has anyone else noticed the uncanny similarity between the two-dimensional computer-generated film character Shrek, and Danny from the two-dimensional Popstars-generated band, Hear'say?

A. BROWN,

Via e-mail.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"She [Fiona May] only lost out on the gold medal because Niurka Montalvo, the Spanish athlete, jumped a longer distance than her."
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC2
(Geraint Criddle)

"Is that a grimace of pain in his right knee?"
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC2
(Alistair Ritchie)

Woman: *My twin sister died when she was 54.*
Kilroy: *How old were you then?*
KILROY, BBC1
(M.D. Wickes)

"I put that down to lack of inexperience."
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC2
(Sean McGinley)

"I just want to get back to the shape I'm in now..."
JAMIE BAULCH
(Angus Silvie)

"Could I please borrow a cup of Viagra?"

Urinal heap

Sir,

Your correspondents in Eye Letters 1032 and 1034 talk of bad manners at urinals. At football grounds around the country I have seen a number of instances of men relieving themselves whilst drinking pints of lager. One can't help thinking that it would be better for all concerned if they cut out the middle man and poured the stuff straight down the toilet.

Best wishes,
VERNON ROPER,

Steyning, W. Sussex.

Sir,

My experience is the worst of the lot... at half-time urinals are really flowing... hearing a big clunk to my left... so what was the clunk?

Just in time to see him retrieve his mobile from the torrent, shake it and put it back in his pocket.

Cheers,
JOE ADAMS,

Via e-mail.

Sir,

Perhaps I can "trump" Richard Bartholomew's letter regarding phone conversations at the urinal.

I was "easing myself" in the sit down facilities of a former employer when I heard a mobile phone ring in the next-but-one cubicle. The incumbent proceeded to conduct a conversation whilst doing his business, something I considered very unbusinesslike. Needless to say, I finished my business in a particularly noisy fashion.

Yours sincerely,
CHRIS GIBSON,

Gilmorton.

Sir,

Speaking of peeing... during last year's Gay Pride Week I was in the Leicester Square Gents taking a leak when an elderly TV (not a pretty sight) came in, stood at the urinal, hitched up his mini skirt and, while pissing, took out a compact and lipstick and proceeded to adjust his make-up.

Sincerely,
GARRY CHAMBERS,

London N3.

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

Letter from **Lebanon**

from Our Own Correspondent

OUR CHOUF mountains are known for their beauty and for the base cruelty of the massacres that took place there during the civil war. Indeed, the slaughter of the 1980s marked the bloody culmination of a 900-year rivalry between the Maronites, our largest Christian sect, and the Druze, the baggy pants-wearing followers of an offshoot of Islam.

It was thus a brave move by Nasrallah Sfeir, the Maronite patriarch, to choose to visit the Chouf this month. And welcoming him to Mukhtara, the Chouf's "capital", was Walid Jumblatt, the Druze chieftain whose men carried out many of the massacres.

Well-wishers of both faiths lined the patriarch's route while Lebanese of other religions – we have 18 – admired what seemed a genuine and rare scene of reconciliation. Everyone approved – apart from the army and security forces.

A handful of students along the route had shouted "Syria out", a reference to the foreign forces that first rolled over the border in 1976 and still occupy much of our land, and an apparently mild test of our right to free speech.

Sfeir, who has toned down his own criticism of our Arab brothers across the border since some Syrian troops were pulled out of Beirut in June, told them to be more constructive. But the army decided to flex its muscles. Within 72 hours the khaki boys had rounded up around 250 members of Christian groups who oppose Syria's presence here. Sadly, our lily-livered constitution does not allow soldiers to make arrests unless martial law has been declared. It is just as well, then, that the army was able to explain things. "A bunch of conspirators," a statement explained, was planning to start riots and to "resurrect the civil war."

Many of those arrested had attended a reception for the Maronite patriarch in the Chouf. They included followers of Michael Aoun, a former army commander who led a revolt against Syria in 1989-90, and members of the illegal Lebanese Forces. When a few cheeky relatives and supporters gathered to protest outside the justice ministry, Syrian plain-clothed security agents were on hand to dish out savage beatings.

In fact the clampdown has been brewing for months. Our Syrian friends have been busy building up the army and security forces to compensate for declining influence among our politicians, and to counterbalance Rafik Hariri, our bushy-eyebrowed, billionaire prime minister.

Syria prefers Emile Lahoud, our president since 1998, who does what he is told. It helps that he's not the brightest tool in the box. He spends most of his time at the beach and leaves affairs of state to Jamil Sayeed, boss of general security, and Ghazi Kanaan, Syria's head of military intelligence here. Hariri is a different kettle of fish. The immensely wealthy businessman turned politician has an independent mind and a good many friends abroad – from president Jacques Chirac to the Saudi royal family. He is not as pliable as our brothers in Damascus would like, but they grudgingly allowed him back to power last year because the economy is in a mess and he seems the only politician with any chance of sorting it out.

We owe $25bn, which is a problem for us and for those who lent us the money. But it is also a problem for Syria, desperately poor after 40 years of Baathist socialism, corruption and cronyism. Syria needs a prosperous Lebanon as a base from where it can run scams in anything from imported cars to drugs.

So Syria needs Hariri but wants to use the army to make sure he knows his place. It is the sort of divide and rule ploy the Syrians have been trying here for 25 years. The trouble is that Lebanon is not the kind of place where economics and politics can be neatly separated. If the army can go around arresting people to please our foreign masters, we wonder which other laws it might be convenient to ignore.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

○ House of Commons Written Answers for 9th July 2001

Mr Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police forces apply the criterion that recruits may not have

more than a three millimetre gap between their front teeth; and what plans he has to change this.

Mr Denham: The Home Office issues no specific guidance on periodontal conditions. Home Office medical guidelines include a section that recommends forces should carefully consider candidates where there is 'evidence of poor dental hygiene'. The current guidelines are being reviewed as part of a project to develop national job-related standards for police recruitment. We do not know whether any forces apply such a criterion. However, it is known that the Metropolitan Police Service formerly applied this criterion but abolished it in January 2001." *(Hansard, 9/7/01. Spotter: Barry Toogood)*

— ○ —

○ *"Of course we were surprised when these two young women offered to perform a striptease for us," seventy-three-year-old Arne Tokvam told police from his house in Oslo, "because we'd never met them before. But as soon as they'd sweet-talked their way into our house, the blonde one started dancing and removing her top, so we just sat back and enjoyed it."*

Arne and his eighty-year-old brother Oeystein were recalling the curious events that had taken place in their house on the previous afternoon. "The older one, about fifty, was the most wild of the two. She sat with her legs spread across Oeystein, and you know, we saw everything. The younger one, who was in her late forties, left the room after about five minutes, but the blonde one went on for about fifteen. Then she sang a couple of dirty songs, got dressed and left.

"It wasn't until after they'd both gone that we discovered our safe was missing, along with about 60,000 crowns in cash, and some social benefit payment slips, totalling about 15,000 crowns. We'd had a lot of money in the safe, because we were about to make some investments. Still, never mind. It's been a long long time since we had so much fun. You really could see everything." (Verdens Gang, 2/8/01. Spotter: Edward Rock)

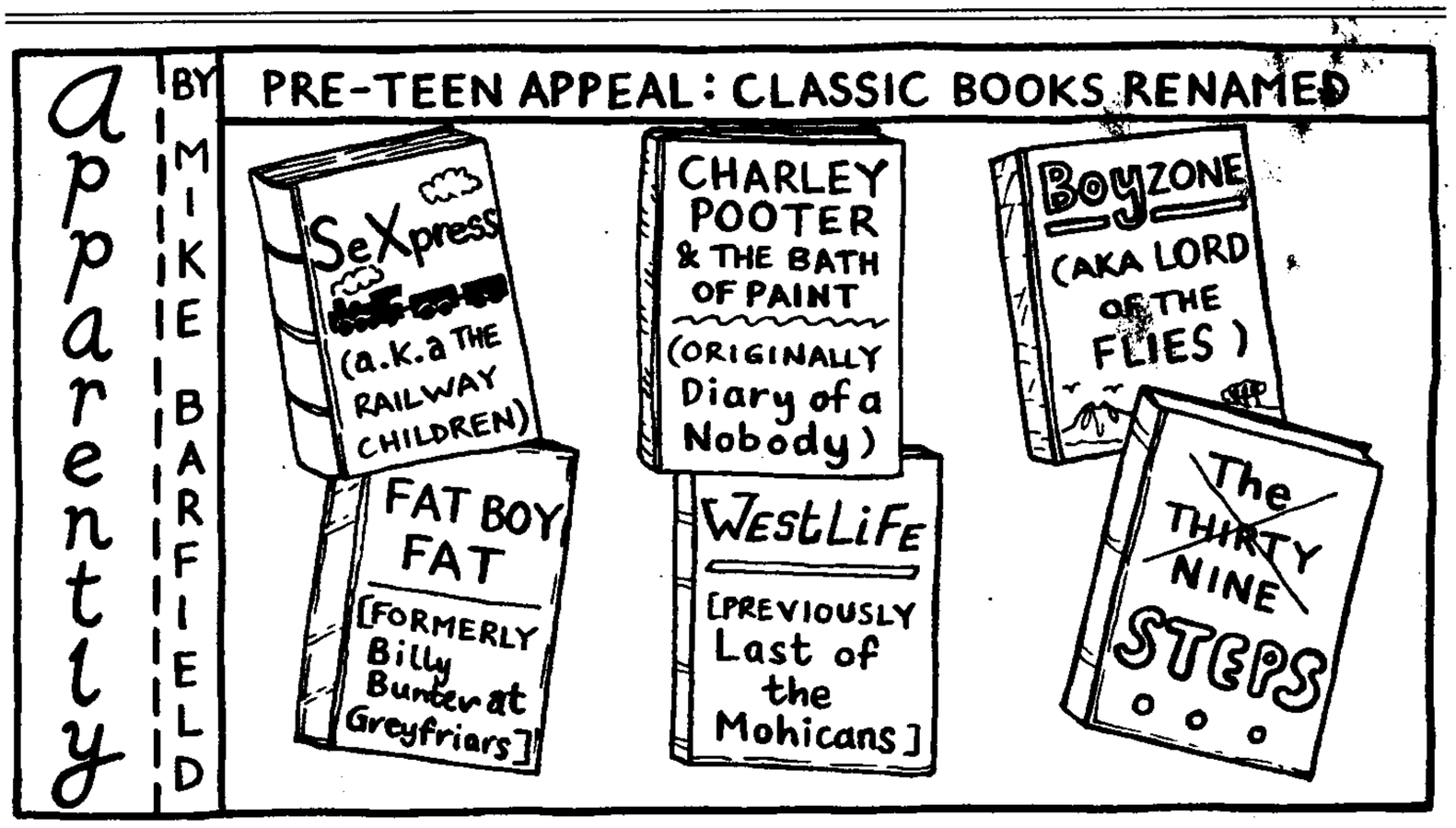
— ○ —

○ "It all started with an enquiry from a nurse," Dr Karl Kruszelnicki told listeners to his science phone-in show on the Triple J radio station in Brisbane. "She wanted to know whether she was contaminating the operating theatre she worked in by quietly farting in the sterile environment during operations, and I realised that I didn't know. But I was determined to find out."

Dr Kruszelnicki then described the method by which he had established whether human flatus was germ-laden, or merely malodorous. "I contacted Luke Tennent, a microbiologist in Canberra, and together we devised an experiment. He asked a colleague to break wind directly onto two Petri dishes from a distance of five centimetres, first fully clothed, then with his trousers down. Then he observed what happened. Overnight, the second Petri dish sprouted visible lumps of two types of bacteria that are usually only found in the gut and on the skin. But the flatus which had passed through clothing caused no bacteria to sprout, which suggests that clothing acts as a filter.

"Our deduction is that the enteric zone in the second Petri dish was caused by the flatus itself, and the splatter ring around that was caused by the sheer velocity of the fart, which blew skin bacteria from the cheeks and blasted it onto the dish. It seems, therefore, that flatus can cause infection if the emitter is naked, but not if he or she is clothed. But the results of the experiment should not be considered alarming, because neither type of bacterium is harmful. In fact, they're similar to the 'friendly' bacteria found in yoghurt.

"Our final conclusion? Don't fart naked near food. Alright, it's not rocket science. But then again, maybe it is?" *(Canberra Times, 17/7/01. Spotter: Michael Doyle)*



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Greetings from the West Country! (Or should that be the "wet country"?) It's raining all the time, the food's ghastly and there's nothing to do! But fortunately we're only here to have our picture taken before we fly off to France!

Everyone we met in Cornwall said "Hey, Vicar, where did you get that fantastic tan? Obviously not round here!" Of course, I didn't let on that it was thanks to our "working trip" to sunny Mexico!

Fortunately, I gather nothing too serious has happened in the parish while we've been away, although if it had, I am always on call, 24 hours a day, via e-mail on my laptop!

Euan says "Cheers" to all his mates!

Yours,

Tony (and Cherie of course!)

Salve! (or "Welcome", as we say nowadays!)

This month we welcome Mr Birt, who has kindly agreed to come in, on a voluntary basis, to advise us how to run the parish more efficiently, and to give the team ministry a "forward planning capability". John has already come up with some really brilliant ideas.

For instance, the PCC is to be broken down into a series of individual working modules, each with its own specific remit and interacting with the others through a central co-ordination unit. To give an illustration of how this will help to streamline parish administration, I have asked John to sketch out how this will work with the flower roster.

Mr Birt writes: *The flower roster will be divided into three roster directorates. The first will originate the "floral resource" (the flowers) and sell them on an internal market basis to the second directorate which will be responsible for "the vase resource" (vases, stands, etc) which they will lease out in turn to the third or "display directorate", in charge of creative arrangements for the presentation of the floral resource to the consumers (ie, the congregation). The quality of the display will be monitored by a fourth directorate, which I have only just thought of, which will take account of such criteria as cost budgeting, consumer response, sustainability and overall human resource efficiency. This is intended to serve as a working template for other areas of parish reorganisation, eg the After Service Coffee To Biscuits supply chain, the Hymn Sheet Resource Distribution Network, the Ongoing Hassock Repair and Replacement Programme and the Strimming and General Maintenance of the Deceased Waste Disposal and Landfill Zone (formerly "the graveyard"). J.B.*

A great start, John! And surely this should silence all those malicious parishioners who have been putting it about that Mr Birt is nothing more than a brainless bureaucrat, who has only been given the job because he is a friend of Mr Mandelson's!

A lovely drawing of Mr Prescott reading the church notices in the absence of the vicar (not that he is absent – thanks to e-mail and mobile phone "He is always with you!"). Thanks to local artist Mr De la Nougerede for this happy image of John! A.C.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

I have put Mr Haskins in charge of the arrangements for this year's Harvest Festival. Over to you, Chris!

"This year I do not want to see the church full of homegrown rubbish from people's gardens. All those mis-shapen marrows, baskets of dirty fruit and pots of badly made jam with mould on the top are totally out of place in a modern church. This is not what the harvest is about nowadays. If you want to make a contribution this year, could you bring in items which really reflect modern agricultural production, eg: chicken massala TV dinners, mechanically-recovered meat pies, Express Dairies UHT low-fat milk and GM rice-style soya bean finger nibbles. All these items are available at shopper-friendly prices from my superstore on the High Street.

So, remember, for this year's Harvest Festival you can't get better value than Northern Foods (Motto: 'The taste to die for').."

Thanks, Chris! Sounds as if we're really on our way with this one! And I'd just add one more thing! We certainly don't want any whingeing farmers at this year's service, spoiling it for everyone else. As Chris himself has rightly said, the sooner all these farmers get a job on a BMW production line the better! T.B.

New Hymn for Harvest Festival

We plough the fields and scatter
The dead sheep on the land,
For they have all been slaughtered
By MAFF's almighty hand.

(adapted from the original by Mrs Beckett)

Nice one, Margaret! I can see we'll be singing that for years to come! T.B.

MORE CREAM TEA, VICAR?

Tony and Cherie are served up a traditional Cornish holiday treat. Mmm! Scones, strawberry jam and lashings of clotted cream! What a pity they didn't have time to eat any of it before catching their plane to France. A.C.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

MACEDONIA

British troops sent in to make sure the terrorists disarm

ULSTER

British troops pulled out even though terrorists refuse to disarm

KNACKER SWOOPS ON BUTLER'S £10 MILLION ART HORDE

by Our Crime Staff **Dawn Raid**

IN AN amazing triumph police yesterday stormed the hideaway home of Royal Butler Paul Burrell to reveal what Inspector Knacker later described as "a veritable Aladdin's Cave of Royal Treasures purloined from the late Princess of Wales".

"My men were aghast when they beheld this glittering treasure trove, this Pandora's box of priceless gems not seen since the days of the Medicis. There has been nothing like it since Tutankhamun's tomb."

Those Stolen Treasures In Full

- One cassette of The Best of Chris de Burgh **Value £278**
- One CD of Classic FM's Mellow Favourites **Value £738**
- One CD of Now That's What I Call Music 19 **Value £1,752**
- One t-shirt (unworn) bearing the legend Jean-Michel Jarre World Tour 1983 **Value £28,000**
- One bottle Waitrose own-brand Apple Blossom and Honey Shampoo and Conditioner for Greasy Hair **Value £732,000**
- One toaster (still in box) marked "A present from the people of Truro" **Value £1,747,311**
- A signed photograph of Eastenders' star Leslie Grantham (TV's Dirty Den) **Value £3,482,375**
- Silver-plated replica Gondola complete with models of Diana and Dodi Fayed marked 'A gift from Harrods' **Value 35p** (o.n.o.)
- Signed first edition of "Getting to like your inner self" by Suzie Allblack (with cover missing) **Value £6,311,432**
- One towel, formerly the property of the Harbour Club, and bearing their insignia **Value £28,438,723**

(For rest of list plus 'A' Level passes, clearing places and Institute of Chartered Surveyors Examination results see pages 3-26)

Car Boot Sale

Said Inspector Knacker, "In our experience of watching films on television, The Butler Always Did It, and we are proceeding on this supposition with regard to us keeping a high profile of arrests during this busy holiday season."

PORN WORLD SHOCKED BY BLAIR HOLIDAY REVELATION

by Our Pornography Staff **Rabbi Lionel Blue-Movie**

SENIOR figures from the world of pornography were shocked to discover that one of their top locations, The Chateau de Sade, was being used by Tony Blair and his family for "holiday purposes".

Said top male porn director Riccardo Desmondi, "This will give the place a bad name. What are my artists supposed to think when they engage in marathon steamy sex romps on the very table where the Blairs ate their breakfast? It will be a big turn-off, I can tell you."

Signor Desmondi continued, "I hire this place from a respectable High Court Judge. I had no idea that he had links with such people as politicians.

"I had intended to shoot my new blockbuster *Mr Whittam Smith Whips It Out* (PG) heres, but now I will have to think again and relocate to Ilford."

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Who Will Puttnam Choose For The Church of England's Leading Man?

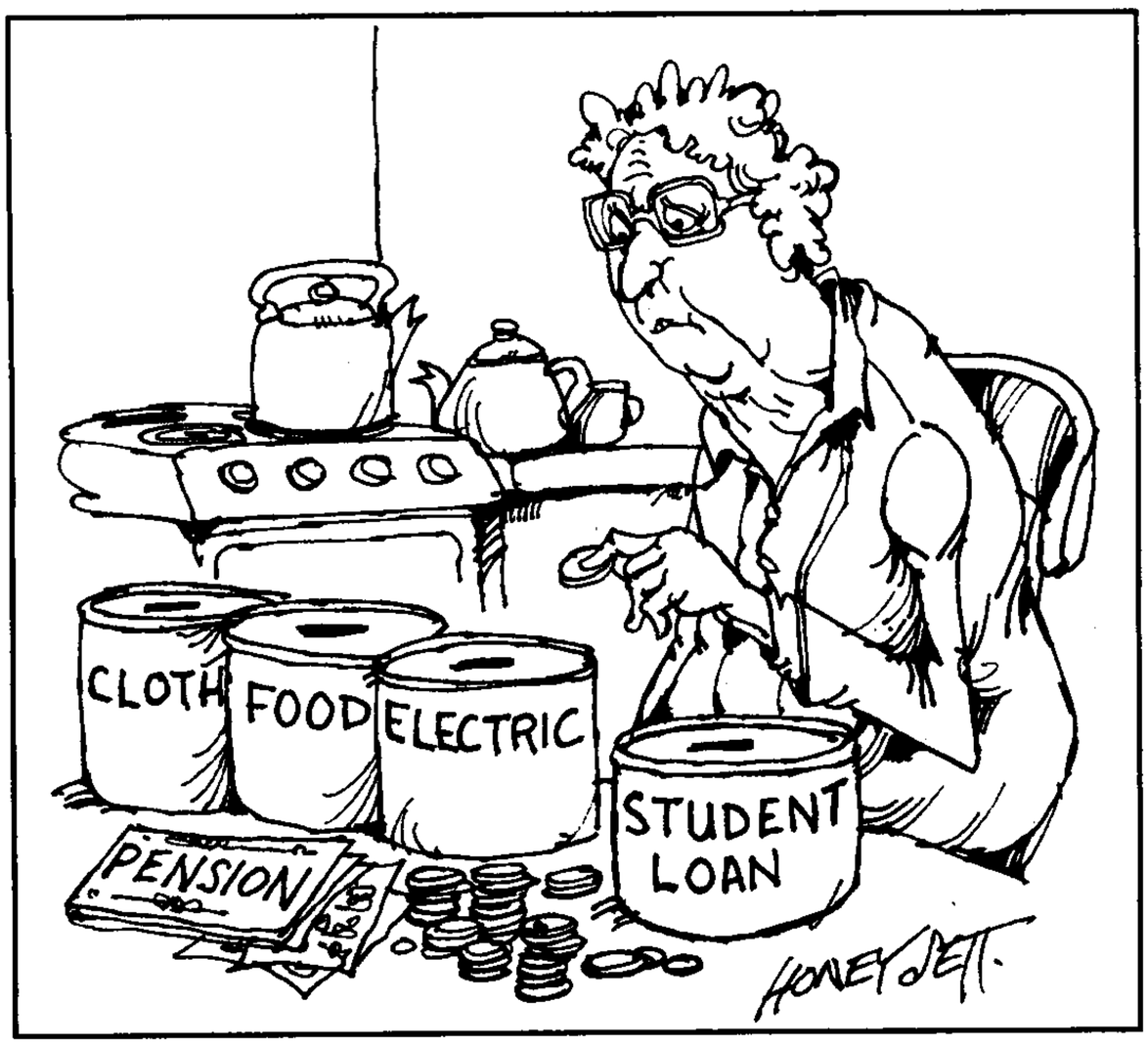
by Our Religious Affairs Correspondent **Clifford Longjohns**

THE FILM-MAKER Lord Puttnam of Chariot is to choose the next Archbishop of Canterbury, it was revealed today.

Lord Puttnam is a life-long believer in Tony Blair and has been attending party meetings religiously since last week. He also has a beard.

The list that the peer is drawing up is thought to include the following nominees:

- **Lord Attenborough**, star of Jurassic Park and fellow bearded director.
- **Charles Dance**, star of Jewel in the Crown, although he is at present beardless.
- **Kate Winslett** Many agree that it is time for a woman as Archbishop and who better than the star of Titanic?
- **Baroness Jay of Crony** Observers are convinced that she will not get the BBC job and will be looking for something else to mess up. *(That's enough Archbishops. Ed.)*



THE BOOK OF SHARON

Chapter 94

1. And lo again, it came to pass in the land of Is-rael that the Araf-ites and the Hamas-ites and all the other -ites waxed wroth, saying "Our land has been taken from us, and the children of Is-rael have pitched their tents even on the ground that has been ours through all generations."

2. Thou mayest have read this before, and thou knowest what comest next.

3. Then rose up a young man who was a Hamas-ite, and girded himself with the weapons of death.

4. And he went up into Jerusalem, unto the house that is called Pizza, where the children of the children of Is-rael were wont to gather.

5. And he slew them, even an hundredfold. And he was himself slain.

6. And there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth among the children of Is-rael at this terrible deed.

7. And they cried unto Sharon for vengeance.

8. And, lo, Sharon heard their cry and said unto them, "This is how we are repaid for trying to make peace with the Araf-ites."

9. "But now," saith Sharon to his people, "the time for talking hath passed."

10. And the children of Is-rael rejoiced with exceeding great joy. For they knew that soon the smiting was about to begin, as surely as the locust shall consume the harvest fields of He-bron.

11. And so the hosts of Sharon went forth into the lands of the Araf-ites and laid waste their dwelling places until not one stone stood upon another.

12. And the streets of those places ran red with the blood of the Araf-ites, even as the smiting continued until the setting of the sun.

13. And Sharon looked upon the smiting and saw that it was good.

14. "For," said he, "it teacheth them a lesson they will not forget in a hurry."

15. But thou dost not need to be an rocket-scientist to guess what happened next.

16. The following day another young son of Hamas girded himself with the weapons of death and went up unto Hai-fa, to repeat the whole sad story.

17. And there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth.

18. And the children of Is-rael cried out unto Sharon and sayeth, "What shall we do now, for this cannot be allowed to go on."

19. And Sharon said unto them, "I have a solution. From now on, it is no more the Guy that is called Mr Nice."

20. "Now I am really going to get smiting like I've never smote before."

21. And the children of Is-rael rejoiced. For this time, they thought, the smiting really will do the trick.

22. And thou dost not have to be an brain surgeon to know what cometh next.

(To be continued for ever)

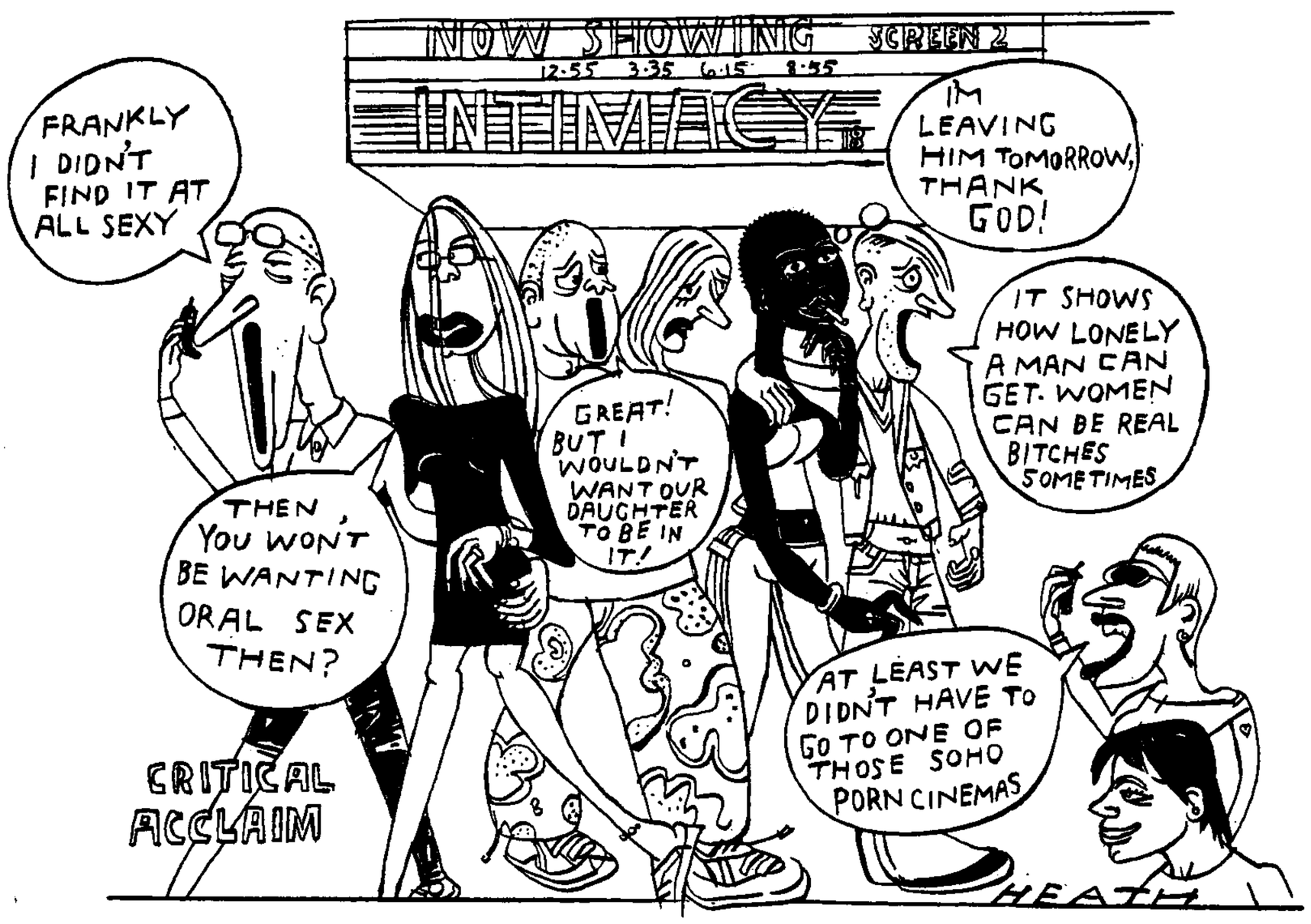
The Alarming Spread of IDS

BY OUR MEDICAL STAFF
DR THOMAS UTTERFRAUD

A LARGE number of senior Conservatives are believed to be suffering from the mystery illness known as IDS.

IDS affects both men and women and attacks the capacity to resist choosing the wrong leader. It produces softening of the brain and the eventual loss of all mental faculties.

Those who have already fallen prey to the IDS virus include Somerset Peer Lord Rees-Mogg, former Prime Minister Baroness Thatcher, former has-been Mr William Hague, the Editor of the Daily Telegraph Charles Moore, and top TV funnyman Mr Jim Davidson who *(cont. p. 94)*


NOW SHOWING SCREEN 2
12.55 3.35 6.15 8.55
INTIMACY 18
FRANKLY I DIDN'T FIND IT AT ALL SEXY
I'M LEAVING HIM TOMORROW, THANK GOD!
IT SHOWS HOW LONELY A MAN CAN GET. WOMEN CAN BE REAL BITCHES SOMETIMES
GREAT! BUT I WOULDN'T WANT OUR DAUGHTER TO BE IN IT!
THEN, YOU WON'T BE WANTING ORAL SEX THEN?
AT LEAST WE DIDN'T HAVE TO GO TO ONE OF THOSE SOHO PORN CINEMAS
CRITICAL ACCLAIM
HEATH

Now The Gloves Are Off!

BY OUR POLITICAL STAFF STEPHEN GLOVE AND MICHAEL GLOVE

AFTER their long summer truce, the two Big Beasts of the Tory Party are once again battling it out for the greatest prize in British politics.

Yes, make no mistake, the daggers are drawn and it's no holds barred as "Killer" Ken Clarke prepares to go the full distance with his ruthless stop-at-nothing right-wing rival Iain "the Chingford Bruiser" Duncan Smith.

Gladiators

The first cannonade yesterday left the Clarke camp in a shambles, when top Tory grandee Lord Ancram accused the former Chancellor of being "not quite as good as he thinks he is, no disrespect intended".

But the Clark-ites hit back with a devastating broadside in the Letters column of the Daily Telegraph from one of the Party's most respected heavyweight figures, Sir Jeremy Hanley.

Hanley, the architect of John Major's 1997 election victory, accused Iain Duncan Smith of having "not been as supportive of my friend Mr Major as he could have been".

Make no mistake, as a heavy pall of smoke last night hung over the Tory battlefield *(cont. p. 94)*

DID THE HAMILTONS KILL JILL DANDO?

Police Investigate New Claim

by Our Crime Staff **Maddie Tupp**

POLICE are looking into fresh allegations linking Neil and Christine Hamilton with the murder of TV presenter Jill Dando.

Said Inspector Knacker of the Yard, "Someone in a pub said they thought the Hamiltons looked the type to assassinate someone so we are obviously giving the matter our fullest attention.

"Although the suspects have a cast-iron alibi due to their being in court at the time, I have put 300 detectives onto the case and will arrest the guilty couple in due course."

Complete Waste Of Police Time

Their names have also been connected with the Great Train Robbery and the Jack The Ripper case.

"We have recently had a report," Inspector Knacker concluded, "that Christine Hamilton is none other than Lord Lucan in disguise and her husband Neil may well be Shergar who *(continued p. 94)*

'A' LEVEL RECORD AS PASSES REACH 110%

by Our Education Staff
Michael Grade-Inflation

THE NUMBER of passes recorded in this year's 'A' Level results have increased for the 19th year running.

Said schools minister, Eslevel Morris, "We are thrilled that for the first time more people have passed 'A' levels than actually took them. This is a terrific tribute to the pupils, the teachers and most of all to this government.

"In Maths, for example," she continued, "87% got 'A*' grades, 42% got 'A' grades and 78% got 'B's or above."

Overall, girls did better than boys with the average sixth-form girl getting 17 'A' levels and 52 'AS' Levels. The average boy, on the other hand, managed only one pass grade in Cycling Proficiency and a fail in the 50 metres swimming badge.

A concerned employers' spokesman said, "There is a yawning gap opening up in this country between the figures that are released and what everybody knows to be the truth." *(Surely 'boys and girls'? Ed.)*

Eslevel Morris, however, denied that standards were slipping, "Anyone who says that is like, well, you know, just really so, I don't know, what's the word... dur-brained. Yeah. Right."

The Eye Clearing Service

There are still places available at the following universities:

Bluewater University, Kent *(formerly NCP Car Parks)*
Nigella Studies (BA) 3-year modular course assessing the cultural significance and iconic status of Nigella Lawson in the 21st century.

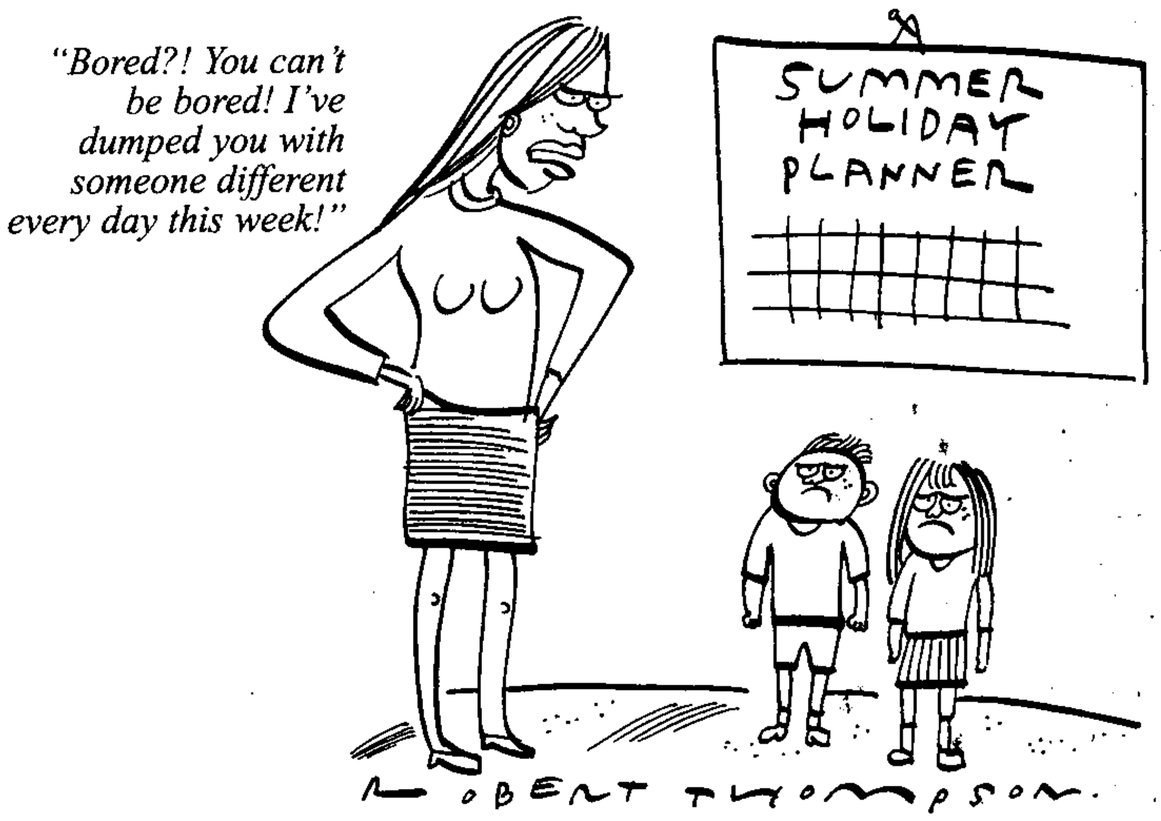
Grades required: EFE

London Greenwich University *(formerly the Millennium Dome)*
Communication Technologies (BSc) 4-year degree course reading text messages on your mobile phone. Itz th 14u!☺

Grades required: EFF

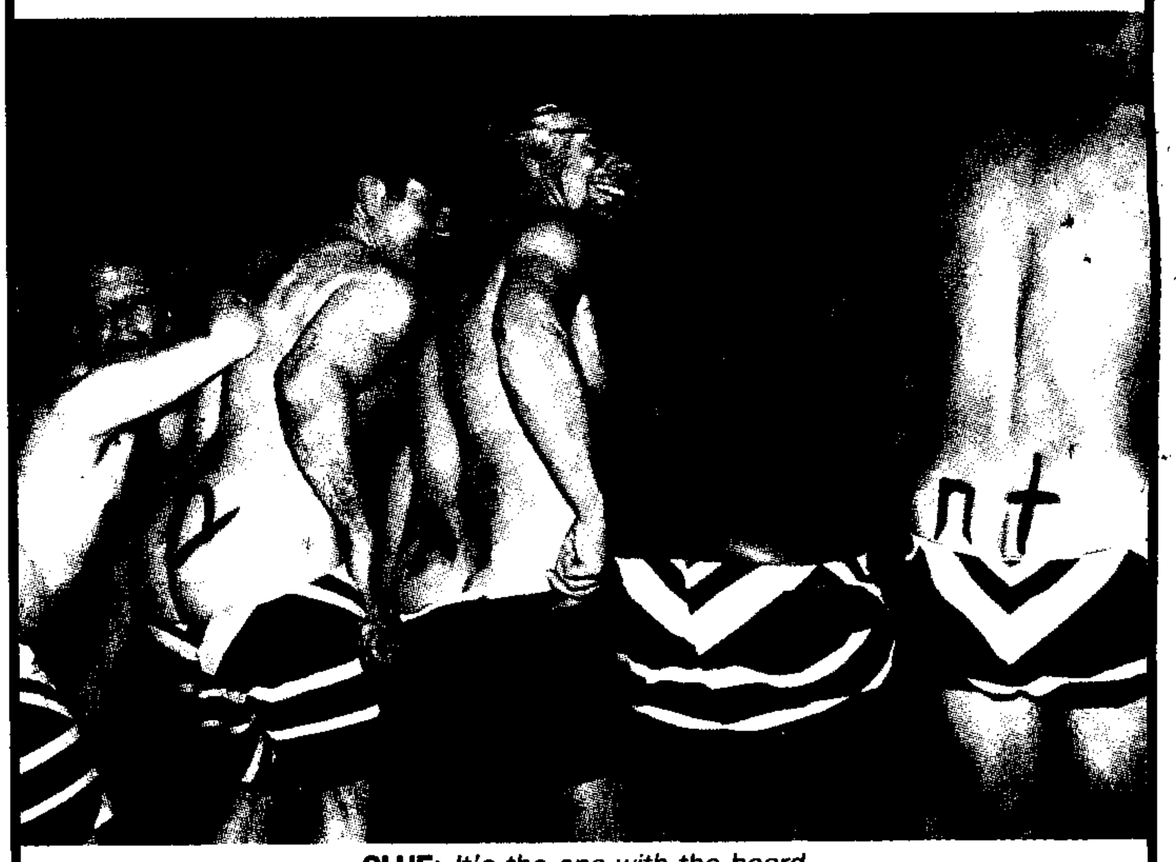
The British University of Motoring *(formerly The British School of Motoring)*
Driving Studies (BSc) A six-week intensive degree course, including theoretical and practical modules with special study of: looking in the mirror, indicating and then pulling out.

Grades required: FFF


"Bored?! You can't be bored! I've dumped you with someone different every day this week!"
SUMMER HOLIDAY PLANNER
ROBERT THOMPSON.

EYE SUMMER COMPETITION

SPOT THE ARSE



CLUE: *It's the one with the beard.*

The Daily Mailograph
Friday, 24 August, 2001

Charles To Marry Camilla – Official

by Our Royalty Staff Sally Season

THE QUEEN has given the go-ahead to the marriage of Prince Charles to his long-time mistress Camilla Parker-Bowles, we can exclusively reveal.

The couple are to wed, probably in a registry office, and almost certainly sometime in the future.

Pension Funds In Crisis

The decision is bound to spark a major constitutional row, which could well lead to a collapse in house prices. *(Surely 'the downfall of the monarch'? Ed.)*

This sensational change of heart by Her Majesty, the Daily Mailograph has learned, is the culmination of two years of careful planning by St James's Palace to win round public opinion to the idea of the heir to the throne marrying someone who is not Princess Diana.

This world exclusive has ben unearthed by a Daily Mailograph investigative reporting team from close analysis of an article in last week's Spectator magazine written by one of the most respected journalists in Britain, Peter Obore.

Says Obore, "According to this chap I met at a dinner party who knew someone who worked in the Palace, the Queen is definitely thinking of giving the green light to her son's marriage sooner or later.

"But don't quote me," the top royal source added, "because I am completely pissed."

Asylum Seekers Hit Million Mark

The report published in the Spectacularlyboring was confirmed by the magazine's highly-respected editor Mr Boris "Beano" Johnson in his influential "Another Voice" column in the Daily Mailograph.

"Cripes, it must be true," said Beano last night. "Obore never gets it wrong. He met this chap at a party apparently, and he gave him the complete inside story.

"Take my word for it," said our star columnist, "this is one for the front page. It could bring down the government, or indeed house prices."

ON OTHER PAGES

Toenails Of The Famous – Can you match these close-ups of bare feet to the celebrities they belong to? 34-35

What Title Should Camilla Take When She Weds Charles?
YOU DECIDE

- A Her Majesty The Queen ☐
- B The Mistress Royal ☐
- C Diana, Princess of Wales ☐
- D The Queen of Tarts ☐
- E The Duchess of Uganda ☐
- F Tampax Pursuivant ☐
- G Mrs Charles Windsor II ☐
- H The People's Paramour ☐
- I Mrs Wallis Simpson ☐
- J The Rumpy of Pumpy ☐

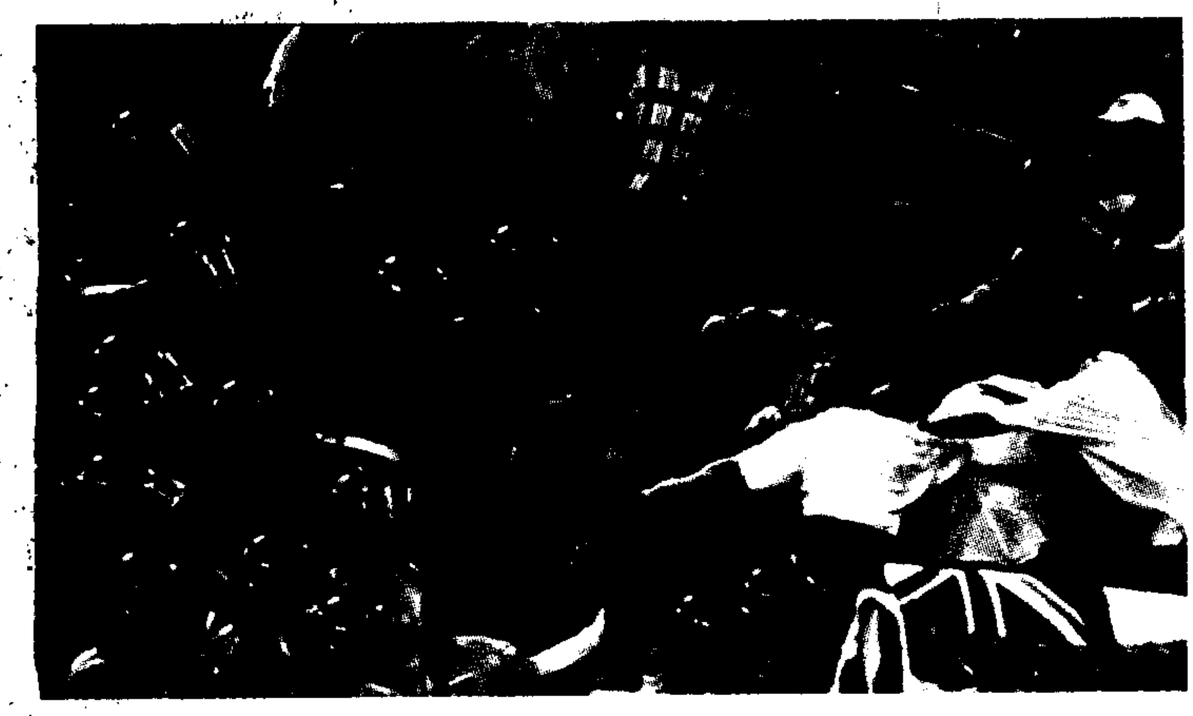
Call now on 0898 714736428 and you can help choose Camilla's constitutional nomenclature!

Celeb

LIGGER

EXCUSE ME. YOU'RE GARY BLOKE ARNCHA?
YEAH THAT'S RIGHT
ER, I WONDER, COULD I HAVE A PICTURE OF YOU AND ME TOGETHER?
SIGH
DO THE HONOURS, WILL YA, HARVEY?
SURE BOSS.
PULL PULL
NOW NAFF OFF!

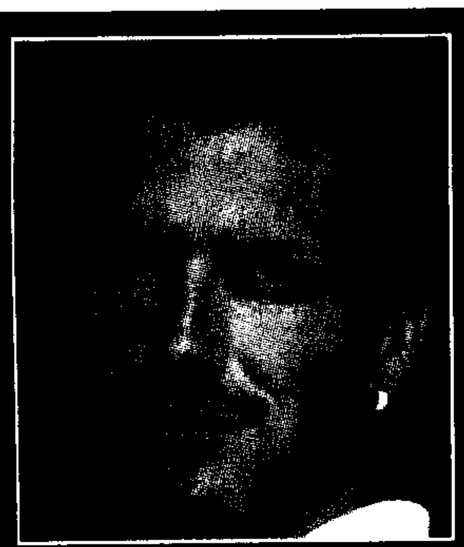
Film Highlights



Planet of the Yobs

HORROR film set in the near future where an astronaut arrives on Earth to find the planet taken over by ape-like creatures who have replaced human civilisation with their own primitive tribal alternative. Contains unsettling scenes of bad language, violence and football. Will the humans survive? Will the yobs wipe them out completely?

YES! IT'S THE NEW-LOOK BECKHAM



by Our High-Brow Staff I. Brow

FOOTBALL fans were amazed to see David Beckham take the field against Holland sporting half a brain.

One observer commented, "Beckham has obviously had half his brain removed as a fashion statement and we can now expect kids everywhere to copy him and have their brains done as well."

The DAILY DRIVEL

24 August 2001

CELEBS GO TO CINEMA

by Our News Staff **Philippa Front-Page**

A NUMBER of celebrities whom no one has heard of last night went to a film which wasn't very good. *(Reuters)*

OTHER TOP STORIES *(exclusive to all newspapers)*

● Old Woman Wears Bikini On Beach pp. 1-6 ● Young Woman Wears Bikini On Beach p. 8 ● Lots More People Whom You've Never Heard Of Wearing Not Very Much On Beaches pp. 9-36

MEDIA NEWS

■ Why Oh Why Is Our Circulation Plummeting? p. 10

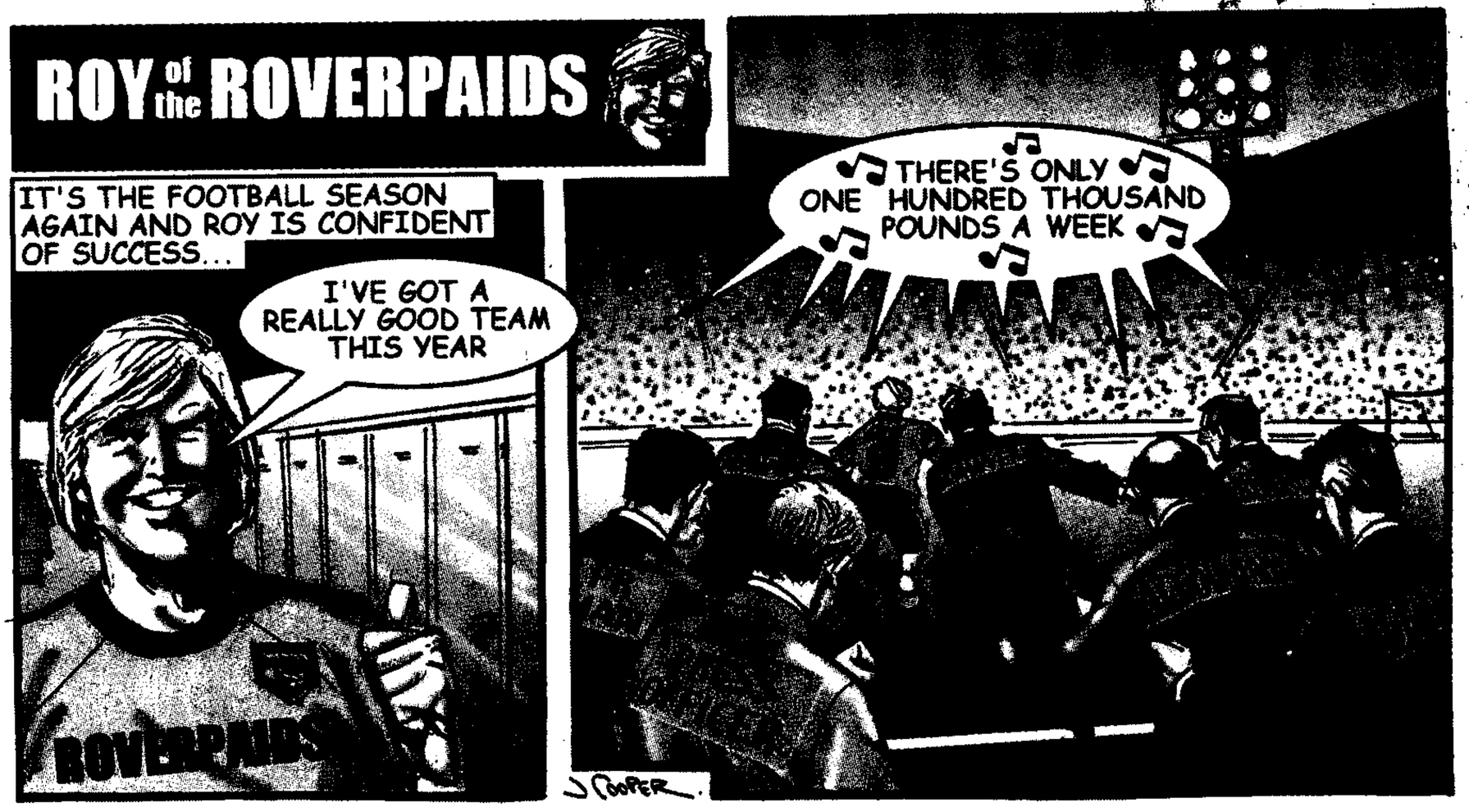
TV Highlights

Celebrity Sleepover
BBC1 Tuesday 8.00pm

An Essex household welcomes Neil and Christine Hamilton into their home for the night, only to discover later that their house guests had in fact spent the night having dinner with friends ninety miles away.

Eye rating: Someone's got egg on their face

TRATTORIA
TONIdelSPIN
Treviso, Italy


ROY of the ROVERPAIDS
IT'S THE FOOTBALL SEASON AGAIN AND ROY IS CONFIDENT OF SUCCESS...
I'VE GOT A REALLY GOOD TEAM THIS YEAR
THERE'S ONLY ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS A WEEK
J COOPER

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Jimmy Knapp, leader of the RMT (formerly NUR)

So. Farewell
Then
Jimmy Knapp.

With your broad
Ayrshire accent
You were the
Voice of
Rail chaos.

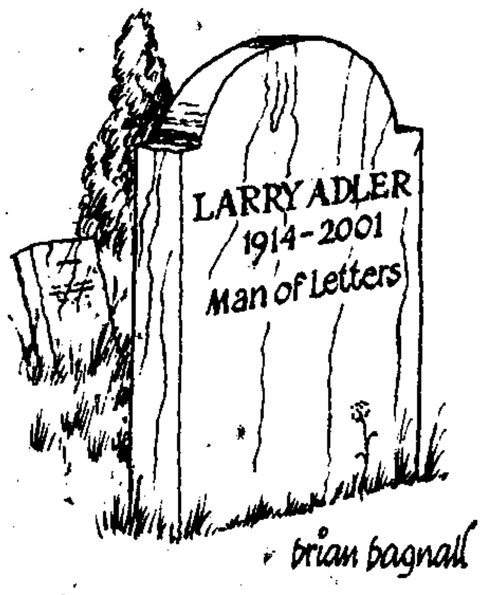
"I must refer
The matter
To my Executive."

Yes, that was
Your catchphrase.

Now you
Are "late"
Again.

E.J. Thribb
(17.30 from Ealing Broadway – cancelled)

E.J. Thribb is appearing in the cloakroom of St Mary's Church in Leith (venue no. 1078) as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Fringe. Entrance £1. Concessions 50p. He will be reading a selection from his latest work, *Requiem For 6 Million Sheep and Other Verses.*



Also In Memoriam Larry Adler

So. Farewell then
Larry Adler.

Famous for your letters
To *Private Eye.*

Keith's Mum says
You also played
The mouth organ.

She says you met
George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Charlie Chaplin *(That's enough names. Ed.)*

E.J.T.

What You Won't Read In The Murdoch Press

THE SUN SAYS

Should The Heir To Throne Be Allowed To Remarry?

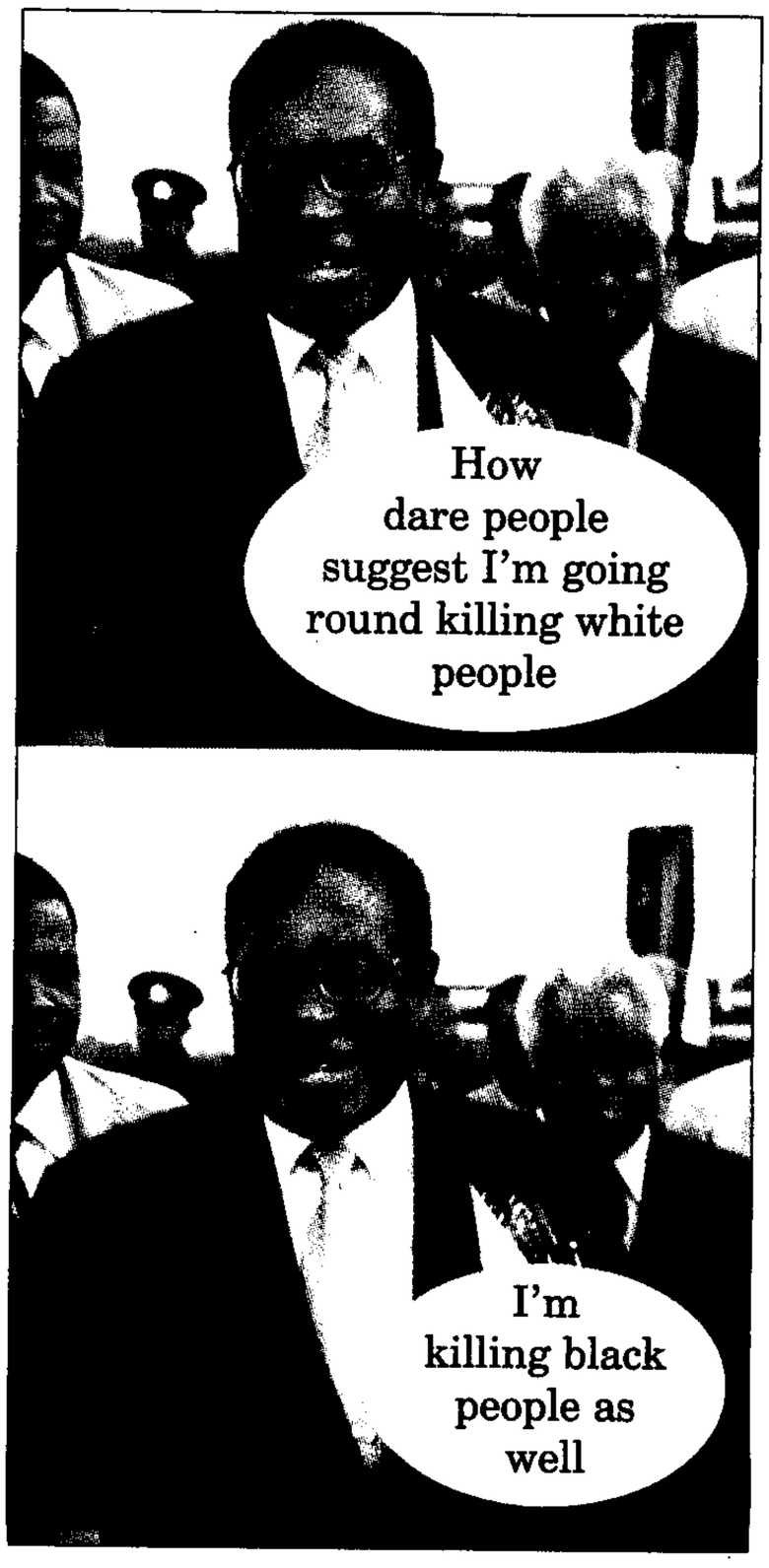
They are both divorced and now they have rekindled their love.

But should the heir to one of the world's richest dynasties be allowed to flout convention by remarrying? What signals does it send out to the millions of people who look to this family to set them an example if their shameless adultery is to be rewarded? Isn't the head of this family a self-appointed guardian of public morality with sincerely expressed Christian beliefs?

Does the title "Defender of the Filth" (surely "Faith"?) mean nothing any more?

No. That is why the Sun says the wedding of Elisabeth Murdoch and Matthew Freud should never be permitted.

© *The Times.*



ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

NO. 94
A.N. WISLON

Have spoons played an important part in English literature, in your view?

Indeed they have. I am reading at the moment Browning's much-underrated *The Ring And The Spoon.*

The spoon of the title, of course, belongs to the Doge, who was originally given it by the Duke of Canelloni as a peace-offering after they quarrelled over the affections of the Comtessa Elizaveta di Hurli.

With your interest in the Church, I expect you are keen on Apostle spoons?

I used to like them, but now I find them rather silly. There weren't twelve Apostles anyway, as I explained in my book *The Seven Apostles.* There were only seven, which makes the whole tradition of giving Apostle spoons at Christenings quite ludicrous.

What are your favourite spoons?

Oh, I love those Apostle spoons. They come in sets of 12, because of the 12 Apostles. I always give them as Christening presents. Some silly people have tried to make out that there weren't 12 Apostles, but I think I've knocked this nonsense on the head in my *Life of Dean Frisbee of Winchester*, the great 19th Century Churchman, who produced a famous paper on the Apostles, which was attacked by Bishop Wilberforce in the House of Lords.

Has anything amusing ever happened to you in connection with a spoon?

No.

NEXT WEEK: Neil and Christine Hamilton – Me And My Scissors

The Daily Telegraph

Est 1855

A Waste Of Space

We at the Daily Telegraph deplore the acres of newsprint given over by the tabloids to characters such as Helen from 'Big Brother'.

Their obsession with foisting nonentities on the British public, who've displayed no ability beyond that of being able to stand upright, and whose only real *claim to fame* is choosing to take part in a pointless contest (one, it should be said, of interest to only a small majority of the British population, but whose importance has been exaggerated beyond all measure by these rags), naturally disgusts all newspapers which are concerned with serious reporting of events.

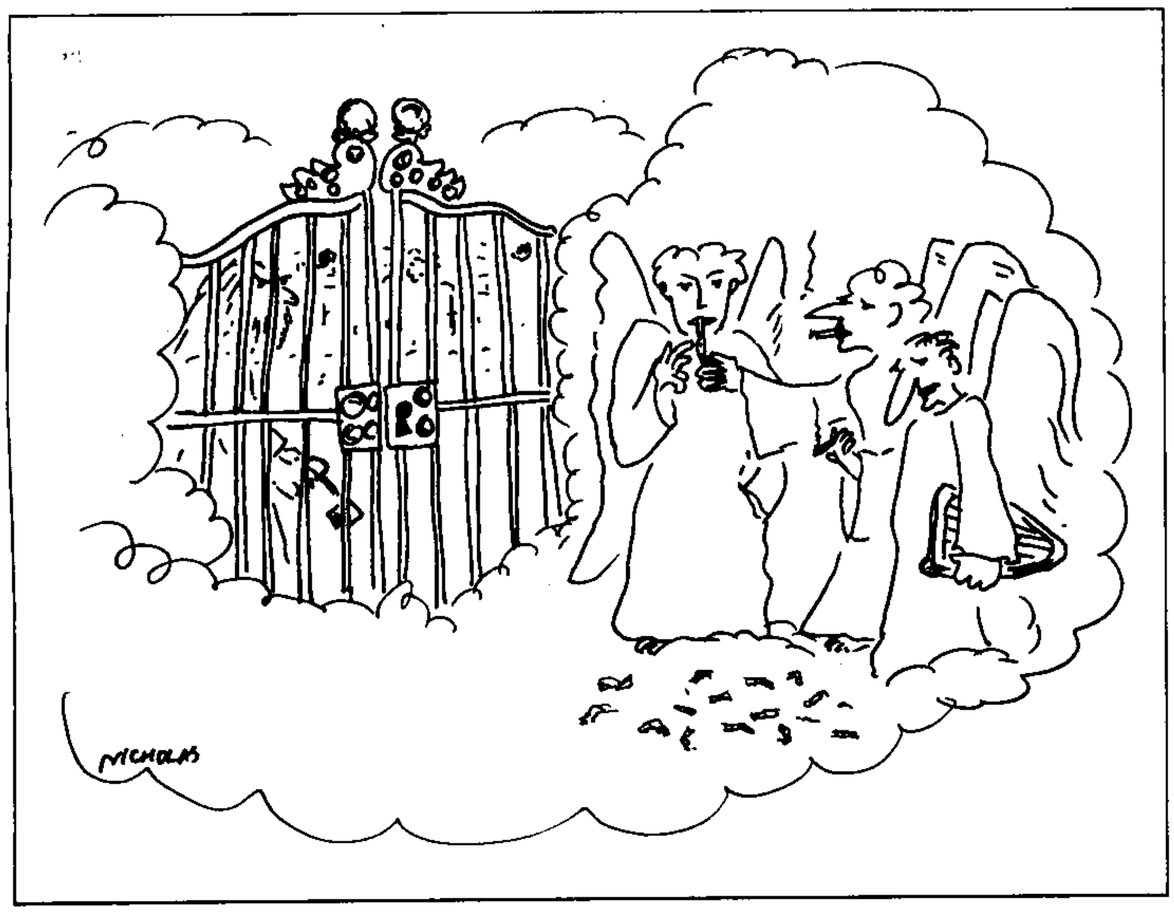
On Other Pages

Iain Duncan Smith hailed as "the only man to save the Conservative Party" by the Daily Telegraph 1

Iain Duncan Smith wows the crowds at Maidstone with his undisputed warmth and charisma as he 'smiles' 2-7

"I like blinking too," admits Tory party saviour Iain Duncan Smith 19

Iain Duncan Smith invites Telegraph readers into his happy home and reveals "he likes cheese" 29



Belfast Latest

PEACE TO BE DECOMMISSIONED

IN A major breakthrough, all parties in Northern Ireland have agreed to bury the peace process, and put it permanently "beyond use". Mr Gerry Adams last night accused Mr Trimble and the British Government of "betrayal" by using the peace process to destabilise the attempts to find peace. But Mr Trimble hit back by ***(cont. p. 94)***

Letters to the Editor

And Did Those Feet?

SIR – I read with amazement of the vicar who refused to allow the singing of the great hymn "Jerusalem" at the wedding of a young couple. No wonder the churches are empty when vicars can act with such crass insensitivity and high-handed disregard for the feelings of two young people on their special day.

Shirley Farquharson-Winkworth (Mrs)
Ringworm, Dorset

SIR – No wonder our churches are empty when young couple can turn up and dictate their choice of wedding hymns to the unfortunate vicar. The Rev. Barry Ducksbury was quite right to send these young people packing, and I speak as a former bursar at one of our leading minor public schools.

F. Carlton-Himmler
Bagshot, Surrey

SIR – As everyone knows, "Jerusalem" is a chauvinistic hymn based on nothing but xenophobic nationalism of the most repellent and degraded kind. It includes a notorious incitement to violence, ie bring me my bow, arrow, spear, etc. What kind of message does this bring to today's youth? No wonder the churches are empty when Britain's equivalent of the Horst Wessel song is sung openly every week in our places of worship.

Gloria Daft (Mrs)
St Veggiburga's, London E3

SIR – The vicar has totally misinterpreted the message of the hymn "Jerusalem", written by one of the great visionary forefathers of modern socialism, William Blake. His great attack on the evils of the industrial revolution (for which today read "globalisation") and his defence of the "green and pleasant land" (for which today read "the ecology movement") are surely precisely the message which today's church would do well to proclaim from the housetops, and we might well then find that the pews would no longer be so conspicuously empty.

Sir David Sparkwood-Benn
Hampstead

SIR – As a church organist, I have often been asked to play surprising pieces of music at weddings. I was recently asked to play Chopin's Funeral March as the happy couple left the church. And on another occasion the bride wanted to enter to the theme tune of The Sweeney, which I was happy to oblige them by playing.

Dudley Twisk F.R.C.O.

SIR – Why didn't the couple choose "I'm Getting Married In The Morning"?

Mike Giggler
(Via e-mail]

SIR – Reading your correspondence on the vicar who tried to ban "Jerusalem", it occurred to me that Mr Kenneth Clarke has been conspicuously silent over this vital national issue. No wonder! Because if he had his way, no doubt the faceless bureaucrats of Brussels would be dictating the choice of hymns in British churches. "I Vow To Thee My Federal Super-State" does not have quite the same ring to it, does it? Thank heavens for Iain Duncan Smith.

Sir Tim Spring-Rice
Malta

Literary Review

Hitting the Botton

The Meaning of Things: Applying Philosophy to Life
A.C. Grayling
(Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.99)

STAND in the reading room of any public library, throw a stone at the rackfuls of newspapers and magazines, and you can be tolerably sure of hitting one of the pretty effusions of A.C. Grayling.

Dr G – an ascetic-looking chap who teaches philosophy at Birkbeck – winds himself through the public prints like loosestrife. The *Guardian* knows him well, the *Observer* greets him as an old friend, and he can be found briskly reviewing in publications as distant in spirit and circulation as the *Independent on Sunday* and the *Literary Review*. It sounds an exhausting life, and no doubt the Birkbeck philosophy students are grateful.

Dr Grayling's latest darling project – there was a thick biography of Hazlitt last year that went on for ever so many pages – is a series of essays on "the meaning of things", gracing the back page of the *Guardian* Saturday Review and, together with certain elaborations and titivations, forming the substance of the present volume.

The template is wonderfully simple. One takes an abstract noun – "reason", let us say, or "mercy" – and ruminates about it for a thousand words or so, bringing in supplementary *illumination* from the great minds of the past two and a half millennia. Parcelled up into three sections – "Virtues and Attributes", "Foes and Fallacies" and "Amenities and Goods", the whole thing is delightfully brainy in an upper-broadsheet kind of way, and will probably have young master de Botton, who tried something similar a while back, feeling very humble indeed.

There is an adjective for the style in which Dr Grayling sets about this enlightened and enlightening task, and that adjective is "sententious". Here he is, for example, on "compromise": "A familiar but profound fact explains the vexed character of moral, social and public debate, namely, that there are almost always at least two diametrically different ways of seeing the same human problem." Gosh. As the late Sir Kingsley Amis might have said, I must go and write that one down.

Happily, though, many an elegant flourish has survived these lapidary statements of the obvious. Here, again, is Dr Grayling on "death": "Nothing seems so dead as clematis in winter. But even as March winds batter one's garden, long green fingers open from the clematis's brittle twigs, seeking somewhere to take a grip on life." I seem to remember Ann Widdecombe's last novel using this as its controlling metaphor, but never mind.

It would be exceedingly wicked for anyone to laugh at this. Teaching philosophy at Birkbeck is a very serious business, and even distinguished philosophers – especially distinguished philosophers – need their relaxations. More to the point, as sedulous little homily succeeds sedulous little homily ("Memory", "History", "Leadership", etc) it soon becomes clear that something else is going on.

Most of Dr G's career in the upmarket media has been fashioned on his status as what might be called a professional atheist, the kind of person who doesn't so much disbelieve in the existence of God as regard him as a personal enemy. *The Meaning of Things*, consequently, is fairly bursting with snooty little debunkings of religion in general and Christianity in particular.

Religious belief is, inevitably, "the legacy of our caveman ancestors", while having "very little to offer moral debate". Subsequently, Dr G works himself up into a tremendous lather about "sin" and "faith", neither of which, as you can imagine, would get much of a look-in in any tutorial he was conducting.

Now, most of this would be fair enough, were it not for, on the one hand, the increasingly shrill tone which this advocate of sweet reason adopts whenever he gets on to the subject of God, and, on the other, the increasingly simplistic fulminations about moral majorities and family values, whose supposed characteristics Dr G seems to have taken straight from the tabloids he elsewhere so roundly condemns.

The general effect of these pious, if not sanctimonious (it is of course significant that one uses these words of something so defiantly anti-religious) denunciations resembles nothing so much as a Lancaster dropping thermite bombs on a colony of acts. All undermined, too, by the fact that Grayling, like every other professional atheist from Professor Richard Dawkins down, brings in all manner of questionable assumptions about human behaviour that he doesn't for a moment address with the care, and venom, lavished on the New Testament.

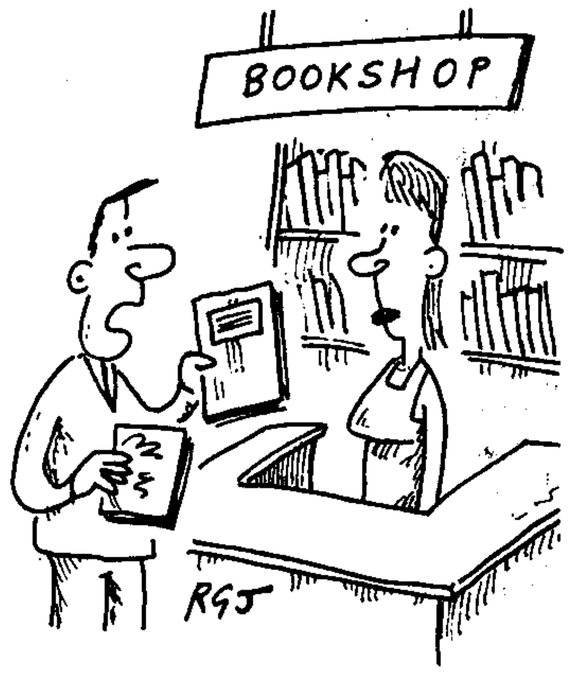
There is also a wider question here: what kind of world would we inhabit if we used all this stuff as a guide? The answer is an environment hamstrung by sheer moral nervousness, in which nothing would ever be done except by essay-writing philosophy dons. Meanwhile, *The Meaning of Things* is not much more than the Reader's Digest "Points to Ponder" column with extra quotations.

Books & Bookmen

■ LITERARY agent Andrew "The Jackal" Wylie isn't usually shy about publicising his famous authors, who include Salman Rushdie and Martin Amis. But he seems uncharacteristically coy about his latest *coup*.

Although it is about three months since Wylie took on Gerry Adams as a client, no mention of the signing has appeared in the media. Why the secrecy? Surely it couldn't be that some of Wylie's other clients and colleagues don't share his high opinion of Northern Ireland's most distinguished man of letters?

■ NOVELIST Victoria Routledge has been making a great deal of



"I want this one, but in a trendy cover like this one."

noise lately about the dreadfulness of the whole "chick-fic" phenomenon.

She contributed a rant to *Publishing News* – headlined "Chick Sick" — about "the implication that all female fiction written by women under 30 is identical in its relationship-obsessed, Bridget-lite glibness", bemoaning "banal covers... *please*, enough disembodied legs". She also laid into publishers for creating a "not-that-accurate-but-too-snappy-to-pass-up pigeon hole" majoring on books about "wine-swilling heroines called Tiff or Sal... with Nightmare Work-Type Things Happening".

Routledge can't be very happy, then, with her own publisher, Simon & Schuster, for promoting her latest effort *...and for starters* with a quintessential chick-fic strapline: "At 25, Iona has it all. A predictable boyfriend, neurotic friends, and a life that's about to spin out of control," says the ad for the book. Nor can she be too chuffed with them for giving the book a banal cover — no disembodied legs, but lots of hearts and a picture of bright young thing in a little black number chewing her thumb in contemplation. Poor lamb.

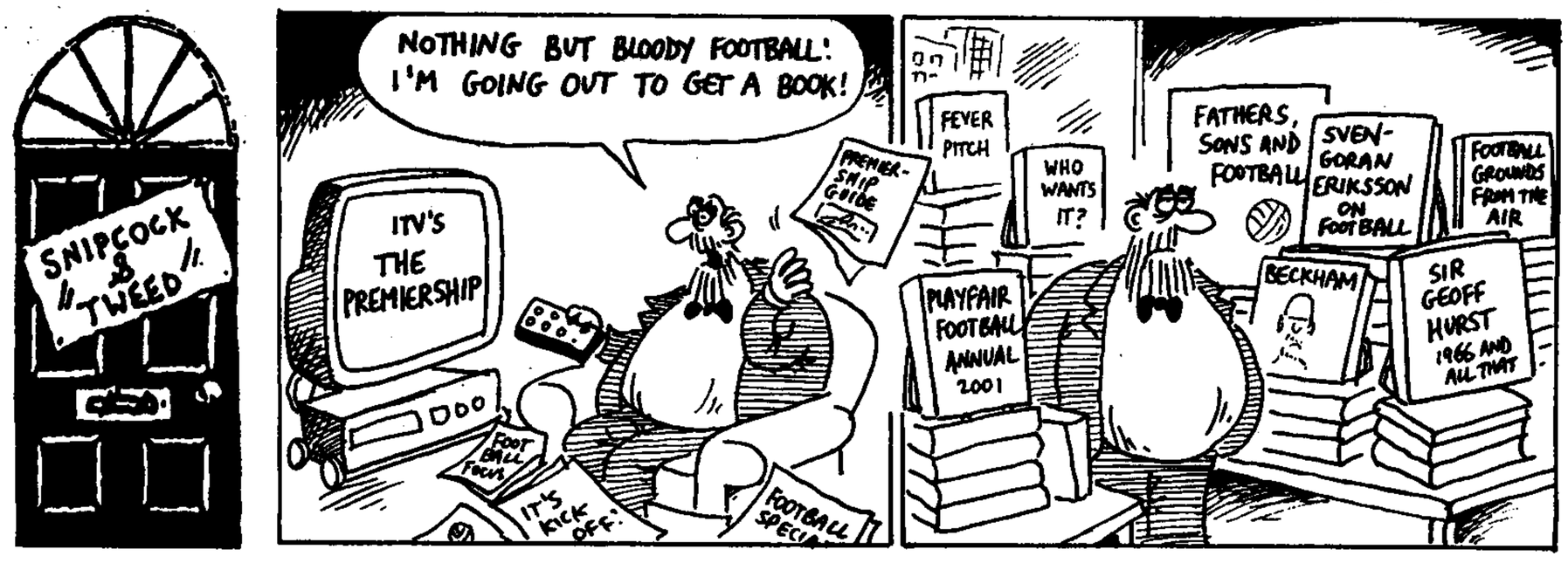
■ FOLLOWING Random House's successful £850,000 bid for the UK rights of Bill Clinton's memoirs, Brian MacArthur, associate editor of the *Times*, wondered aloud in the paper whether the mega-advance culture had gone too far.

"I have been dealing and working with British publishers for more than 20 years and often think they pay crazy money for the memoirs of showbiz or political celebrities," he moaned.

The article is curious on two fronts. First, he admitted a little grudgingly that serializations help shore up the whole "crazy" enterprise. Well, he'd know all about that, being the executive responsible for buying up the *Times*' serials. Secondly, it is obvious that different rules apply to non-celebrity journalists as MacArthur recently accepted a £200,000 advance from Little, Brown for a book about prisoners of war held in the Far East.

"Advances are always overestimated aren't they?" he said modestly at the time of the deal. "You have to take away a lot of tax and fees and travelling expenses."

'Bookworm'



REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

POLITICO's bookshop is trying to offload hundreds of unsold political biographies in its summer sale. As well as pointing to the futility of political biography writing as a way of earning a living, it is also a useful barometer of how well interest in individual politicians holds up, especially once they have left office.

There are big discounts on Julia Langdon's biography of *Mo Mowlam* (published at £16.99, now £8.99) and John Kampfner's tome on *Robin Cook* (was £16.99, now £7.99). But the booksellers clearly see Cookie and Mo as bankers in comparison to their erstwhile colleague *Mandy*, whose biog by Paul Routledge is marked down from £7.99 to £2.99.

The really big discounts are on yesterday's men and women, with *William Hague: In His Own Right* by JoAnne Nadler, and *Ann Widdecombe: Right from the Beginning* by Nicholas Kochan, both published at £17.99, and both now a snip at £3.99. But the best holiday reading bargain must be that unforgettable classic, first published at £12.95 (now £1.95): *Major Major* by Terry Major-Ball.

AD NAUSEAM

FROM the lofty pinnacles of advertising glory to the slagheap of general derision is a mighty fall in just three years, but Smirnoff vodka has pulled it off triumphantly.

It was as recently as 1997 that Smirnoff, then with an agency called Lowe Howard-Spink, was creaming off endless industry awards on the back of its "pure thrill" campaign, in which things looked amusingly different when viewed through a bottle of vodka.

It all hit the skids when Diageo, which owns Smirnoff, decided to change its ad agency. Given that it was on such a roll, you might ask why. So did all of adland.

The answer came under the insidious coverall of "global realignment", which meant Diageo wanted to pool advertising into a large international agency to cut costs. And the ads themselves, be damned.

The task fell to J. Walter Thompson, a multinational agency renowned for producing finely-honed mediocrity with absolute competence. The Smirnoff brief inevitably proved too much for a creative department used to selling processed cheese, and in 1999 there therefore appeared some lamentable attempts at the cutting-edge trendy stuff. Few who saw the over-stylised slot involving Satan having a tattoo removed – so he could shag a nun – will ever forget it.

Most people, however, did forget it: the "no imperfections" work bombed, adland's creative hotshots sniggered contentedly and everyone sat around waiting to see what hapless old JWT would come up with next.

Alas, its latest work is so completely wrong that one's first response is pity, not mirth. The flagship 60-second TV spot has a dog playing a piano, regaling a rapt assemblage with tales of doggy derring-do. It's a cool dog, without doubt, but what the deuce could all this have to do with vodka? The answer: "If Smirnoff made pet food."

The fact that the ad itself is a lemon is only the beginning of JWT's woes. As adland has been quick to note, the whole idea looks decidedly like a flagrant bite of a Carlsberg campaign that aired but three months ago.

But spare a thought for poor old JWT, which tried its darnedest to persuade Smirnoff to run something presentable this time (including a likeable vignette involving a Pierre Smirnoff character that got quashed in early presentations).

Blame for the death of a decent ad campaign should lie as much with a client who lost its nerve, dilly-dallied until the idea was old hat and ultimately plumped for advertising's lowest common denominator – our four-legged friends – as with the agency which gave it the option.

LUVVIES

The Edinburgh Festival is more than its sum total – an effervescence, an explosion, a raging torrent of need, a need for fusion, an alarm call or a call to arms. The festival, the guts and viscera of the festival, is generally now in the Fringe. Like pilgrims, we come offering our wares, our sacred thoughts. Here can at last be revealed the actor. Stripped down. Bare. Unadorned. Unshackled. Hercules unchained. You have nothing to lose but your chains.

STEVEN BERKOFF
Scotland on Sunday

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

THE Dartington summer school in Devon is a venerable event run like a holiday camp for the music-loving middle classes.

High court judges, heart surgeons and senior civil servants gather to play string quartets under the tutelage of internationally known professionals who give concerts in the evenings. In the afternoons they go to piano classes or sing madrigals under the beech trees. It's all frightfully genteel.

At least it was until last week when a sheet of paper appeared on the noticeboard announcing that Tuesday night was, er, Queer Night At Dartington. Interested parties were invited to gather at 10.30pm in the main refectory at a table which would be decorated with purple balloons.

For 24 hours Dartington's quiet calm was shattered as all conversation – normally dominated by interpretative issues in late Beethoven or early Mozart – concerned which distinguished judges, surgeons or performers might turn up. In the event just three brave souls brazened it out by the balloons.

The interesting corollary, from which Dartington will probably never recover, was that almost every other table in the refectory was occupied at 10.30pm by people (some of them extremely eminent musicians) who sat watching the purple table and were clearly in some inner turmoil as to whether they should join it.

Gavin Henderson, the summer school's flamboyant director (as well as principal of the newly-housed Trinity College of Music) insists Queer Night At Dartington was a spontaneous event with no official status. But he may well find a gathering lobby for it to enter the curriculum.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

Pseuds Corner

All the most enduring images of Big Brother relate to the theme of romantic disappointment. Tom's erection in the first series, clearly visible to the camera underneath his red football shorts, was far more memorable and iconic than any other scene before or since. One felt for him as the victim of a woman who was never going to take him where he clearly needed to be and as a symbol of frustrated masculinity, unable to retreat from his tormentor and deprived of the right to protest.

CHARLOTTE RAVEN
Guardian

Gathorne Gathorne-Hardy, Earl of Cranbrook's most recent article, in the millennial issue of the Sarawak Museum Journal, discusses the changing environment of Borneo over the past 40,000 years in the light of archaeological research.

'This week's contributors'
Times Literary Supplement

Were it not that I like and respect Andy Marr and believe him to be a force for the good, his march towards interpretative hegemony would terrify me.

SION SIMON
Daily Telegraph

Do you know I'm actually quite relaxed about my washing-up liquid? In fact I'm quite attached to its perky, primary gaudiness between the taps. It provides an element of organic uncontrivance in a sea of design control.

LAURENCE LLEWELYN-BOWEN
Daily Express

Contributors: Emma Taggart, R. Barnard, Tom Phillips, John Barry, Robert Coombs, Anon

£10 paid for all entries

Pseuds Corporate

Q – Why is Compaq changing the colors of its ProLiant server and racks?

A – Rather than changing colors, we are leveraging a portion of our color palette – which includes Graphite, Carbon and Silver – across our Compaq ProLiant, AlphaServer, Himalaya and StorageWorks product lines. This new consistency is the culmination of our strategy to integrate the three heritage businesses of Compaq, Tandem and Digital Equipment Corporation in the enterprise customer space.

From the Compaq Web Site

The beauty of nature enriches our lives

JP Morgan has a long-standing tradition of involvement in projects that enrich our environment the world over. We look for opportunities to nurture the growth of new ideas and encourage existing projects to flourish – echoing our commitment to innovation and our heritage of global finance. JP Morgan believes nature's beauty is something from which we all benefit.

We are proud to support the Chelsea Flower Show Gala and the Royal Horticultural Society.

New College Oxford
concert programme advertisement

IN THE BACK

FOOT & MYTH

FIRST there was to be no inquiry into the foot-and-mouth disaster and now along come a dozen, including that run by Olaf, the European commission's anti-fraud police.

The one investigation we are not to have, however, is what the Great Caravanner Margaret Beckett called "the all-singing, all-dancing public inquiry" which everyone except the government wants: ie the type of investigation which might expose what a total cock-up our Beloved Leader and his cronies have made of every aspect of the FMD crisis.

Of the three government inquiries, which a furious Mrs Beckett, secretary of state for the environment, food and rural affairs, was recalled from her French caravan park to announce, it is hard to know which least lives up to her fatuous claim that they are "independent".

It is certainly a safe bet that Tony Blair's BT crony Dr Iain Anderson, who got a CBE for his time as a Number Ten special adviser on the millennium bug, will not come up with anything too embarrassing about the political handling of the crisis. Similarly, the inquiry into the future of British farming to be chaired by Don Curry, best-known for his chairmanship of the useless meat and livestock commission, can be guaranteed to come up with recommendations which will tally nicely with "new" Labour's "anti-small farmer" agenda, for which agri-businessman Lord Haskins has now become the chief cheerleader, as he looks forward to "half Britain's farmers" being forced out of business.

But perhaps the oddest inquiry is the one given to the Royal Society on the future handling of infectious animal diseases. What is odd is that some of the chief culprits in mismanaging the FMD crisis have been leading members of... the RS! At the heart of running the shambles has been an RS mafia led by professors David King (Blair's chief scientist) and Roy Anderson (whose computer model conveniently predicted that the outbreak would be over by 7 June).

It was the president of the Royal Society, Sir Robert May, who advised Blair that his friend King should succeed him as government chief scientist. It was another mafia-member, Sir John Krebs, who swung the appointment of his friend and fellow-FRS Anderson to run the crisis with his computer, even though Anderson's "contiguous cull" policy, dreamed up on the basis of zero veterinary experience, has led to killing more than five million healthy animals without bringing the disease to an end.

The RS's track record in using bogus inquiries to defend its members' interests is impressive. When Dr Arpad Pusztai of the Rowett Institute came up with the revelation that GM potatoes tested in his laboratory might not be safe, the fanatically pro-GMO society rushed into action with a review vilifying Pusztai's findings, without allowing him to present all his data.

The editor of *The Lancet*, which had published part of Pusztai's research, described the RS's review as "a gesture of breathtaking impertinence". But not content with this the RS then drew up a "guidance for editors" in reporting scientific stories. "Newspapers," it claimed, "may suppose they have produced 'balanced' reports by quoting opposing views' on scientific issues." Not so, ruled the RS, if the anti-establishment view is held only by "a quixotic minority".

The views of people like Pusztai should not be publicised. The same principle will no doubt apply to the views of all those who believe no one has done more to turn FMD from a drama into a mega-disaster than certain members of the RS establishment.

'Muckspreader'

POLICE 5
Northumbria's Intensive Don't-Care Unit

LEAKED internal documents and tapes from Northumbria police suggest there have been serious irregularities and mishandling in one of its biggest-ever murder inquiries into deaths of patients in a Newcastle hospital intensive care unit.

The documents, copies of which have been seen by the *Eye*, also indicate that the recent inquest into the deaths of four of the patients may have been gravely misled. Coroner David Mitford recorded two verdicts of natural causes, one accidental death and one "open" verdict.

The bundle was leaked to lawyers representing Kathleen Atkinson, the senior nursing sister who was at the centre of allegations that she had criminally hastened the deaths of terminally ill patients in her care. Two charges of attempted murder and one of incitement to murder were eventually dropped by the crown prosecution service (CPS), but not before Mrs Atkinson had spent three months in jail. And as she told the *Eye*, a stain on her character still remains even after the inquest verdicts.

The leaked documents may now finally eradicate that stain. The key one is a 21-page report written by a detective inspector Norman Oliver, who became the deputy investigating officer in the case. Responsible for preparing the file for the CPS, he uncovered a series of alarming discrepancies in the evidence and flaws with crucial witnesses.

In a damning indictment of police, he found that written statements, compiled from lengthy taped interviews with witnesses, contained "evidence" not actually found on the tapes, while important evidence from the tapes was "omitted". One crucial written statement was, he said, "in complete contradiction" to the tapes. In another incident he outlined, he said there appeared to have been "a deliberate step in avoiding evidence which might have supported Atkinson".

The prime witness, a female nurse, had voluntarily withdrawn one allegation that had led to the incitement to murder charge. Concerns over that and medical evidence about the death prompted DI Oliver to reexamine all her evidence. That included two further allegations that Mrs Atkinson had hastened the deaths of two young patients, a leukaemia victim and a burns victim, by withholding treatment. At the end DI Oliver concluded the nurse's damning evidence was "at best embroidered and fanciful, but at worse deliberately misleading".

He alleged that the inquiry team had been "misled" and the CPS and leading counsel had been provided with information "which was not factual".

What appears to have happened was that on 12 January 1996, Kathleen Atkinson – going through a traumatic marriage break-up and hitting the bottle – telephoned her unit saying she had taken an overdose. Her colleague, Ellissa Patterson, voiced concerns with her boss, charge nurse Christopher Quinn, about Atkinson's behaviour and in particular in relation to the burns victim and in giving an unprescribed dose of morphine to an elderly woman. As Oliver's report makes clear, however, these complaints were *not* made because Patterson believed Atkinson was criminally liable; they were made siimply because of her concern about Atkinson's ability to continue in her role as an ITU nurse.

Nevertheless, the inquiry snowballed until the gross flaws in evidence – largely confirmed in a second leaked statement from a detective Sergeant Raymond Noble – were exposed and the case against Mrs Atkinson was dropped in February 1998.

DI Oliver's reward, it seems, was to be dropped from the inquiry team. He was allegedly told "other people were not happy with what I had done". He wrote to his superiors: "I believe I was removed from this post for no other reason than that I found serious faults in the evidence and this eventually resulted in charges against Atkinson being discontinued."

He called for an independent investigation and outlined a series of further lines of inquiry that needed to be undertaken to ensure that the coroner would not subsequently be misled. But Northumbria carried out only an internal inquiry – which found nothing amiss. DI Oliver was not called to give evidence at the inquest last May.

A month ago Richard Haswell, Mrs Atkinson's solicitor, received the police package that would have enabled her legal team – had they had it before the inquest – to challenge much of the adverse evidence presented to the coroner. As it is – and despite the inquest verdicts – the stain on Mrs Atkinson remains.

In his letter to Northumbria Mr Haswell wrote: "Within two weeks of Mrs Atkinson being charged we were being advised by the crown prosecution service that there were discrepancies in the medical evidence and that witnesses were unreliable. Having now had the opportunity to read these statements – the bulk of which were taken well before Mrs Atkinson's arrest – we cannot believe that Mrs Atkinson was actually arrested..."

Northumbria says a full review and investigation was carried out in 1998 under the direction of an assistant chief constable after the case collapsed. "The inquiry did not find evidence of impropriety on the part of the investigation team," it says.

Mr Haswell has sent the dossier to home secretary David Blunkett who, for the sake of the families of the patients, as well as Kathleen Atkinson, should order an open and independent inquiry into the affair as soon as possible.

HARD CELL

LAST week the police complaints authority (PCA) announced that it had called in a separate police force to investigate the death of a young man in a cell in Newquay police station.

Jamie Burton, 23, died last May. He had been "arrested for his own safety" after there were reports of him staggering around the streets and going blue in the face. He was placed in a cell at around 11.30pm on the night of p23 May and was found collapsed at around 5am the next day, raising serious concerns about the care afforded him.

Devon and Cornwall police had been investigating the conduct of their own officers in the tragedy, but Duncan Gear, of the PCA, declared last week that public interest dictated that "impartiality needs to be demonstrated" in the investigation.

Strange that right up until then, Mr Gear had been resisting demands from Jamie's mother, Jayne Walters, that another force be called in to investigate her son's death. Only last month he wrote: "I continue to consider that an outside force would not add any benefit to the investigation."

Could his change of heart have anything to do with the fact that Bhatt Murphy, solicitors now acting for the mother, have reminded the PCA of the home secretary's pledge that "serious complaints are investigated by police services other than the one to which relevant officers belong"... or with the PCA's own voiced concerns about the numbers of deaths in police cells of those arrested not for a crime but for being "drunk and incapable"?

ENRON AND THE SKILLING FIELDS

IN JULY the health and safety executive (HSE) revealed that deaths at work had increased by a third (34 percent), with 295 workers losing their lives in 2000/2001. This was a tragedy for relatives and friends of the dead, but also a blow to the target-obsessed government, whose "revitalising health and safety action plan" set a goal of reducing workplace fatalities by 10 percent.

Disturbingly, some of "new" Labour's best friends are involved in the workplace deaths. Ten days after the announcement, three workers were killed at the Teesside power plant run by Enron, one of Labour's most consistent corporate donors (see *Eyes passim*). The workers were killed when a transformer exploded.

In 1998 Enron was fined £10,000 by the HSE when another worker received 62 percent burns after liquid naphtha leaked from an untightened pipe at the same plant. Enron defended its safety record, pointing out that its sub-contractor had received a larger fine over the earlier incident.

Enron, which has donated "£5,000 or more" to the Labour party for three years running, does not recognise unions at the Teesside power plant. The AEEU is recognised throughout the UK power industry and plays a key role in workplace safety committees and site inspections – but not at Enron.

The AEEU has asked for recognition but says the firm was "not enthusiastic" about entering into discussions with it. Enron claims there is no union at the plant "because there has been no interest declared by the employees for trade union recognition".

Enron has charmed "new" Labour, but its reach goes even further. The firm's cash has attracted many powerful figures. Former Tory energy minister and head of the press complaints commission Lord Wakeham sits on the Enron board. Former electricity regulator Stephen Littlechild worked as a "consultant" this year for Teesside Power Ltd, the Enron-led consortium that owns the Enron-run power plant involved in the explosion. None seems bothered by the firm's record, however.

In Britain the firm has hit controversy across its operations. The HSE fined Enron £17,000 for an accident back in 1992 during the building of the Teesside plant. In 1998 there was a safety-related strike during the construction of the firm's Sutton Bridge power station. Enron also runs Wessex Water, which is regularly fined thousands of pounds for pollution incidents.

Enron's financial success seems to have blinded the Labour leadership to the firm's history, but there are signs of a change afoot. Enron chief executive Jeff Skilling shocked commentators by resigning shortly after he had flown into Teesside to express sympathy for the dead power workers. His resignation was put down to "personal reasons".

FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS...

● **FILIPINO NURSES:** The *Eye* wishes to apologise for giving the impression in the last issue that the hiring of highly trained foreign nurses to be used as underpaid skivvies was confined to a few care homes for the elderly and disabled. It is, we are reliably informed, "a minute taste of a multi-million pound scandal" that stretches from Scotland to the south coast.

Last week, in the first case of its kind, the Avon Gorge nursing home in Bristol – which had 95 staff cleaning cars, dishes and floors as part of its "adaptation" courses for foreign nurses – was condemned by the nurses' regulatory body, the UKCC, and banned from "training" any more foreign staff.

But other homes are now under investigation. The *Eye* has been sent three samples of "contracts" – illegal under UK employment law – of the kind the nurses, some often highly trained A&E specialists, have been obliged to sign in homes in Wiltshire, Swindon and Hertfordshire.

In some the threat of "repatriation" for engaging in trade union activity, has made many of the nurses fearful of complaining.

Father Claro Conde, a Catholic priest who has been counselling distressed Filipino nurses, has been working with Unison to "rescue" nurses and to find them work within the NHS. He told the *Eye* that some of the nurses and their families had paid up to £3,000 to agents in the Philipines to secure work. He was now getting calls from nurses from India and China as health and care providers in Britain look to other parts of Asia to recruit.

The NHS itself has long been plundering the developing world for skilled nurses to fill the gaps in our own hospitals. But the obvious flip-side of this benefit to the NHS is that needier countries who paid to train these nurses are being stripped of their skills. Figures released last week showed that numbers recruited from the Philippines tripled last year to more than 3,396. There were also huge increases in numbers recruited from countries like Ghana, Zambia and Malawi – and despite pleas from Nelson Mandela not to lure away any more of South Africa's skilled medical staff, there were 1,086 new South African nurses registered last year.

● **FAIRGROUNDS:** Following our report in the last *Eye* about the health and safety executive's (HSE) secrecy surrounding fairground and theme park safety, two readers tell us of recent thrill ride accidents and an apparent lack of interest on the part of the safety watchdog.

Three weeks ago Robin Hanny's 15-year-old daughter Alice broke her arm and suffered extensive bruising after their Big Dipper car at Blackpool pleasure beach, failed to stop and careered into the back of another.

Three days after the accident Mr Hanny wrote to the theme park managers and copied his letter to the HSE, listing 14 concerns. These included the fact that there was only one paramedic to deal with casualties; people were removed from the scene before their injuries were assessed; they were obliged to give staff a statement before they were treated; and there appeared to be no organised emergency procedure.

So far he has had no response from either the theme park or the HSE.

David Partner, who suffered a cracked rib on a Cyclone Twist ride after his children were thrown against him from the force of the ride at a fair in Frome, did get the HSE to investigate after he told them his casualty department said it had seen "a dozen" similar injuries that weekend.

The HSE wrote: "Arising from these inquiries, the ride operator has stated that: The ride is heavily regulated and undergoes regular inspections. Persons observing the ride before entering would see that it is very fast and safe." So that's all right, then.

● **MMR DOCTOR:** As predicted in the last *Eye*, the decision to try to pick off one GP who is administering single jab alternatives to the controversial measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) triple vaccine, as a deterrent to others has proved an own goal.

Following publicity surrounding the complaint to the general medical council (GMC) about Dr Peter Mansfield, demands from concerned parents for individual vaccines has risen tenfold at his clinic. And one GP has already come forward to fill any gap in the unlikely event that the GMC's interim orders committee proceeds with the case and imposes restrictions on Dr Mansfield.

He and his legal advisers are meanwhile quietly confident they can defeat the trumped-up claims against him – that delay in administering single vaccine puts children at risk and that national interest dictates they should have the MMR jab. For a start he administers the jabs only six weeks apart and therefore cannot be accused of delay. He doesn't recommend six needles, as alleged, but only two or three because 20 years of single vaccines demonstrated that they were effective for up to 15 years.

The need to administer two MMR jabs so close together (at 15 months and just before starting school) raises a serious question, therefore, about whether combining three live viruses into one jab makes the vaccine as a whole less effective. The *Eye* has learned there is some work, still in its early stages, which suggests that might be the case.

And Dr Mansfield can cite the current issue of the *BMJ*, which accuses Worcester health authority (which brought the case with the encouragement of the government's health department) of "abusing its power" – string words from the usually restrained medical press.

Meanwhile Jabs, the self-help group for people with vaccine-damaged children, is considering making a similar complaint to the GMC about David Salisbury, the government's principal medical officer – and head of vaccination – but for the very opposite reason: namely that he is denying parents the right to choose the single jab.

IT'S THE PITS

NEWS that casting has begun for a feelgood film about the way the 300 miners of Tower colliery in South Wales bought their "failing" pit in 1995 and made it a success against all the odds will come as little comfort to the 250 coalminers who lost their jobs at Hatfield colliery in Yorkshire last week.

Their fate, unreported in the national media, appears to be of equal indifference to all those who might have been expected to help: the government, the local council and their union.

Hatfield, at Stainforth, near Doncaster, was bought by its management during the Tories' pit closure programme of the 1990s. Now its Japanese bankers have pulled the plug just as a new seam, High Hazel, was coming on line. High Hazel contains so-called "green" coal, with minimal sulphur and chlorine and virtually no ash. RJB mining was buying it to mix with its own coal destined for power stations; the nearby Drax power station valued it so highly it had offered £12m for coal still in the ground.

Hatfield sits atop the Barnsley seam, which has reserves of 90 million tonnes of coal running right the way to Bridlington on the coast. It is equivalent to four Selby coalfields and could provide work for 200 years. The perfect solution, one might have thought, for a government embarking on an anxious energy review and committed to finding the best available environmental solutions.

The miners want to buy and run the pit themselves, Tower-style. But for that they need financial help, now, to keep it open long enough for the High Hazel revenues to start rolling in – an estimated three months. But energy minister Brian Wilson is on holiday and his department has nothing to say about the matter. In any case Wilson, who just happens to have the Hunterston nuclear power station in his Cunninghame North constituency, sees reviving nukes as the future.

Arthur Scargill

Doncaster council has shown no interest in helping with a rescue. No Labour member of the Beacon of Sleaze has shown his or her face at the miners' meetings, nor has any council officer been in touch. Local Labour MP and former miner Kevin Hughes, at least met the men, but was so unenthusiastic many of them were for giving up the fight there and then. National Union of Mineworkers president Arthur Scargill was unavailable for comment because he is "abroad".

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

THE treasury's already shaky position over its failure to spot and stop the Equitable Life scandal could be further undermined as a result of its effective endorsement of the insolvent pension provider to civil servants for additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) boosting their occupational pensions.

An *Eye* reader – a retired civil servant – recalls being informed that only Equitable and Scottish Widows were approved by the treasury for AVC payments once these came in from 1987. The clear message to civil servants was that the treasury had evaluated those offering AVC programmes and had selected Equitable as one of the two best pension providers. Civil servants were not alone in being encouraged to make AVC payments to Equitable.

AVC policyholders make up the largest portion – 650,000 with at least 560,000 in company schemes – of the estimated one million Equitable victims. These include MPs, the BBC, newspaper groups and even the asleep-at-the-wheel regulator, the financial services authority (FSA).

AVC victims must now wait to see if their employers will make up the 16 percent stolen from their pension funds to keep Equitable afloat and the cut in bonuses for this year and last, not to mention the further loss if they decide to exit Equitable before its insolvency becomes more than technical. Company schemes may be charged more than the 7.5 percent ripped from individual policyholders if they withdraw their funds.

Given that the treasury had a quasi-regulatory role with the insurance industry when AVCs were introduced, even if Equitable was supposedly overseen by the Department of Timidity & Inaction, and then took over direct responsibility prior to the hand over to the sleepwalkers at the FSA, civil servants feel they can now look to Gordon Brown to make up their losses. Civil service unions are expected to press the treasury and the Cabinet Office, trustee for civil servant pensions, to protect their members. But the Cabinet Office has denied any legal liability. Instead, it is examining a bulk transfer of all civil servant AVC holders to a new pension provider.

Similar embarrassment threatens already much devalued high street giant Marks & Spencer. Equitable was chosen by Marks to help set up and run its own pension and insurance operation in 1995. Then Equitable managing director Roy "Don't Blame Me" Ranson is still a non-executive director of Marks & Spencer Financial Services.

"There are no secrets. It's all about caring for customers," Ranson declared when announcing the deal but not the now £3bn guaranteed annuity rate black hole in Equitable's finances. Hopefully the St Michael image will not receive any further battering by evidence that M&S customers or staff were encouraged to buy into Equitable products.

Meanwhile Equitable victims will not be reassured by rumours that some major pension fund holders have been able to transfer without suffering the 16 percent amputation announced on 16 July. The suggestion is that transfer requests have been backdated by manipulating pre-16 July contacts in client records to create requests to transfer funds. Certain of these transfers, it is suggested, have been made to the Halifax which has acquired the Equitable sales and admin teams. No doubt Equitable policyholder groups will be eager to ensure that such suggestions are untrue.

SPECULATION that organised crime and even the IRA may be behind the Thailand "boiler room" scam which has relieved the greedy and the stupid of up to £100m is no surprise. Selling worthless or over-priced shares through teams of hard sell telephone salesmen working off scripts at small brokerage firms was developed by Mafia-linked American conmen in the 60s and refined during the 80s. Similar scams still operate in the US today often in partnership with other organised crime groups such as Russian mobsters.

"Boiler rooms" went global in the 80s under the leadership of veteran mobbed-up stock swindler Thomas Quinn and his associate Arnold "Charley" Kimmes. They patented the style of operation closed down last month in Bangkok and

"Can I put in a claim for interview trauma compensation?"

before then in the Philippines. Quinn and Kimmes pillaged perhaps as much as $500m from investors around the world while operating a raft of impressive sounding brokerage firms from bases in London, Amsterdam, Marbella and Dublin. Certain of Quinn's friends – his mother was Sicilian, which explains his links to the Genovese crime family – were close to pro-Republican elements in New York's Irish-American community.

Quinn and Kimmes proved what previously seemed implausible: that tens of thousands of gullible investors could be persuaded to part with big bucks to buy shares in a company they had never heard of, in a country other than their own, in a business they did not know from a man they had never met.

The *mo* developed by Quinn and Kimmes is identical to that used in Bangkok by the Irish, American, British and Australian frontmen now under investigation. Not surprising as many in Europe learned at first hand from the Quinn/Kimmes script during the 80s and in smaller successor scams during the 90s, including those selling malt whisky and champagne. Many "sucker lists" are passed on to each new operation as fruitful prospects for switching into new scams under the guise of recovering losses.

Find or invent unknown US companies supposedly listed on the hard-to-track NASDAQ over-the-counter pink sheets. Create brokerages with names which sound rich, respectable, British or American or which almost mimic well known City names. Benson Dupont Capital, Gerson Lehmann, Sherman Brothers, Wellington and Kensington International were names used in Bangkok. Employ foreign nationals, especially those with knowledge of "cold call" selling or timeshare and whisky frauds, to man the phones on a fares plus commission basis. "Bait and switch" investors with supposed newsletters recommending real companies sent to lists of shareholders in small companies. Never sell to locals as they go to the police who can act quickly. Only victimize foreign investors faraway where it will take a year or more for their police to push the police where you are operating into action. Almost certainly ripping off foreigners in their own country will not be an offence where the "boiler room" is based. Keep the proceeds of the fraud out of the country where the "boiler room" is running. Be ready to close down and reopen at speed. Never leave home without your passport.

Quinn was eventually nailed by first the French and then the Swiss. After jail terms there the US let him off in return for promising never to sin again. Whether he stuck to that generous deal seems unlikely. His name surfaced in the Morgan Grenfell/Peter Young scandal as being involved in Young's biggest ($100m-plus) and most worthless share pick, Solv-eX. Quinn helped $200m American insurance swindler Martin Frankel to find takeover targets and provide advice. Frankel's notebook records that he transferred $13m to Quinn during 1999 before fleeing to Europe.

Several of the Bangkok salesmen were recruited in Britain, especially in London and Manchester, as well as coming from Ireland, the US and Australia together with English-speaking backpackers travelling in Thailand and needing cash.

Can any *Eye* readers throw light on the business pedigree of the major players in the Thailand "boiler rooms" such as Irishmen John Kealey, Ronan Murray and Paul Hickey, Australian Scott Fisher, Brits Steven Hooper, Adrian Robert, Tim Jones, Patrick Campbell and John Hayward and Americans Jim Muller, Richard Albino and Donald Kern?

ANOTHER new wrinkle on an old scam concerns a refinement of the ever profitable Nigerian "419" letter fraud – please lend us your bank account to transfer millions we as corrupt Nigerian officials have stolen from our country in return for a juicy share.

This time it is emails not letters and Sierra Leone not Nigeria which is to be the victim. The

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG

ADVERTISING ROBS PEOPLE OF THEIR SELF WORTH···
SOHO SQUARE
···AND THEN SELLS IT BACK TO THEM FOR THE PRICE OF YOUR PRODUCT!
CREATIVE ASSOCIATES
GREAT PITCH SON···
THE ACCOUNT IS YOURS!

millions on offer come from the treasure hidden by one David Sankoh, assassinated former top official in the war ravaged West African country's diamond mining ministry. The unfortunate Dr Sankoh was supposedly killed by RUF rebels headed by his namesake, Foday Sankoh.

However, not before as an honest civil servant Dr Sankoh had amassed and spirited out of Sierra Leone no less than $10.5m. This is now sitting in a trunk held by a security company in nearby Ivory Coast which is where his widow Jeneth and her children are now hiding.

All you need to do in return for a share of the haul is to go to Abidjan, persuade the security company to hand over the trunk to its rightful owner, Sankoh's son, put the $10m in a local bank with instructions to transfer it into your own bank account, pay out the Sankohs and keep your share.

Why the resourceful Sankohs cannot do this for themselves as the beneficiaries of the trunk and its contents rather than bombard cyberspace with emails for help is not made clear. Sadly the widow Sankoh could not answer such questions as she was said by her son to be discussing her problems at church with her pastor – the only outsider to know her secret, apart from the recipients of her emails!

What is clear is that whether you would survive a visit to the Ivory Coast is much less uncertain than that there is any money in the trunk or indeed any trunk.

JUST FANCY THAT!

THOSE who still have savings in the beleaguered pensions firm Equitable Life are sorely in need of a laugh. Happily Halifax Equitable, the company which has taken over Equitable's sales force and administration arm, has obliged.

Last month Equitable clients received a mailing from the firm promising "financial advice that paves the way for them to retire early, plan their tax affairs more efficiently, use their investments more effectively, or enjoy a more flexible income in retirement".

THE breakdown in negotiations to settle the £1bn claim against Barings' auditors Coopers & Lybrand as was and Deloitte & Touche Singapore will now create the prospect that Coopers will be found guilty of negligence and/or professional misconduct by its peers before a judge has to decide the case.

Coopers' appeal against the adverse findings of a joint disciplinary scheme (JDS) tribunal are due to start next month. It is considered unlikely that the appeal panel will overturn the JDS verdict which can then be published along with its criticisms and a likely hefty fine. Coopers has prevented the findings being made public to date by their appeal.

But the court action, set to last several months, will not now begin until October at the earliest. So it could be continuing after Coopers has been found guilty by the JDS. That prospect may encourage further efforts at a settlement which so far have been blocked by the "vulture funds" holding Barings bonds who want a bigger payout than Coopers, now part of Pricewaterhouse-Coopers, will agree.

'Henry Slicker & Associates'

Stock Horror

Carlton TV chairman Michael Green, shrewd as ever

He sold 3.3m shares at last year's peak

...Green's profit from the sale **£29m**

...Value of those shares today **£12m**

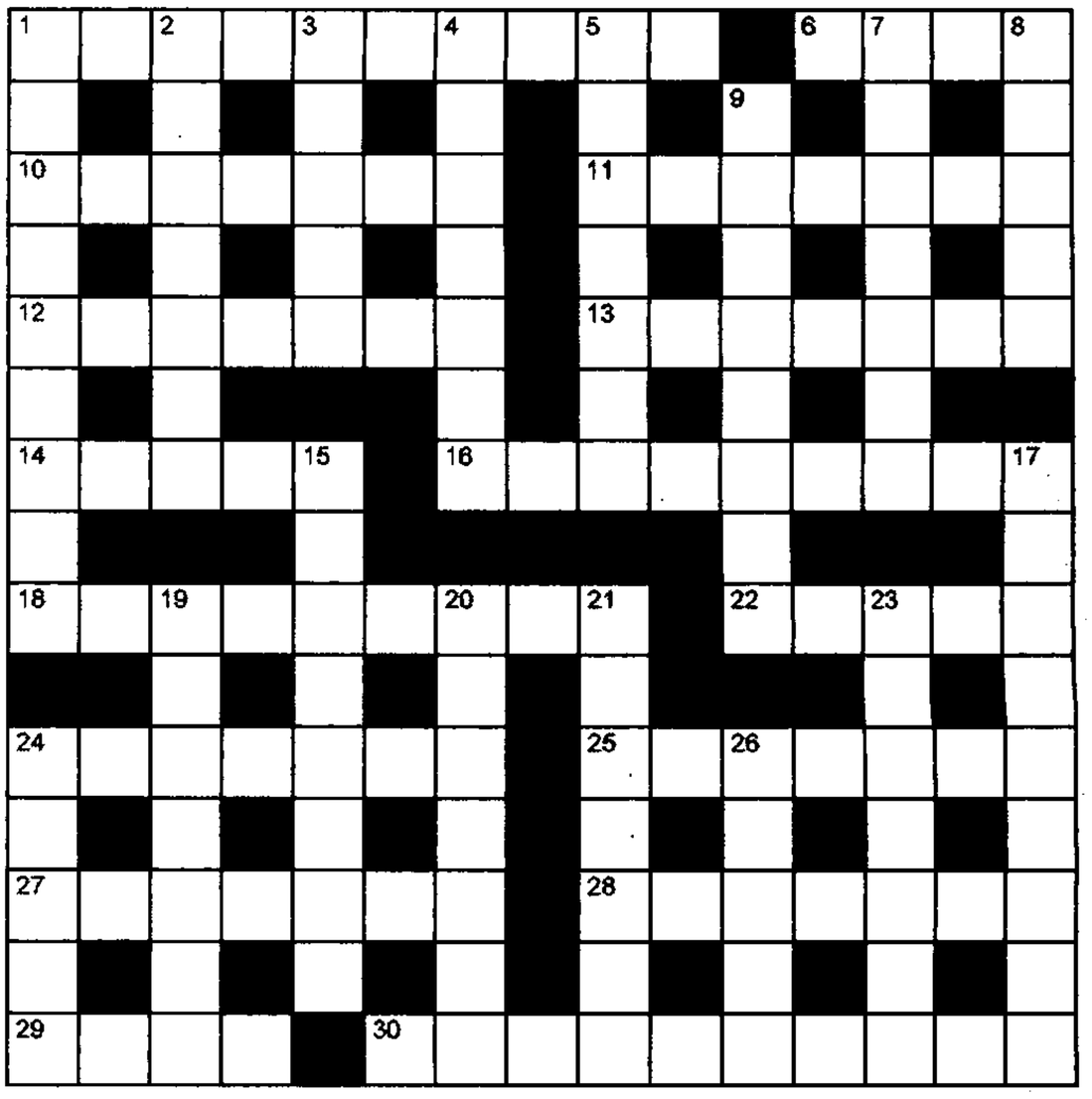
EYE CROSSWORD 190

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 31 August 2001.

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

189 winner
LEONARD BAZAR



ACROSS

1 Fanny gets off work (6,4)
6 Cane remedy for adolescent outbursts (4)
10 One wary of "cop a feel, ta!" ejaculation (3-4)
11 One of Brenda's men posing web question about head from royal (7)
12 Crazy Fuhrer's exclusive possession? (7)
13 Sod about Gore's bilge content (7)
14 Not a good place for endless, gay activity (5)
16 Piss-artist ballsed-up local choir right away (9)
18 Wee Dicky, shafted by Piers, is far from happy (6,3)
22 Kid those vulgar people it's phallic-shaped ... (5)
24 ... penis tip, fairly rough, not broad (7)
25 Cook on TV, knocking back drink with singer (7)
27 Criminal giving invertedly snobbish girl one in queer surroundings (7)
28 In which 'X' appears symbolically in arse-top kinky leg underwear (7)
29 Enterprising capt. gives drink to Kent's opener (4)
30 Having an affair – at it continuously (8,2)

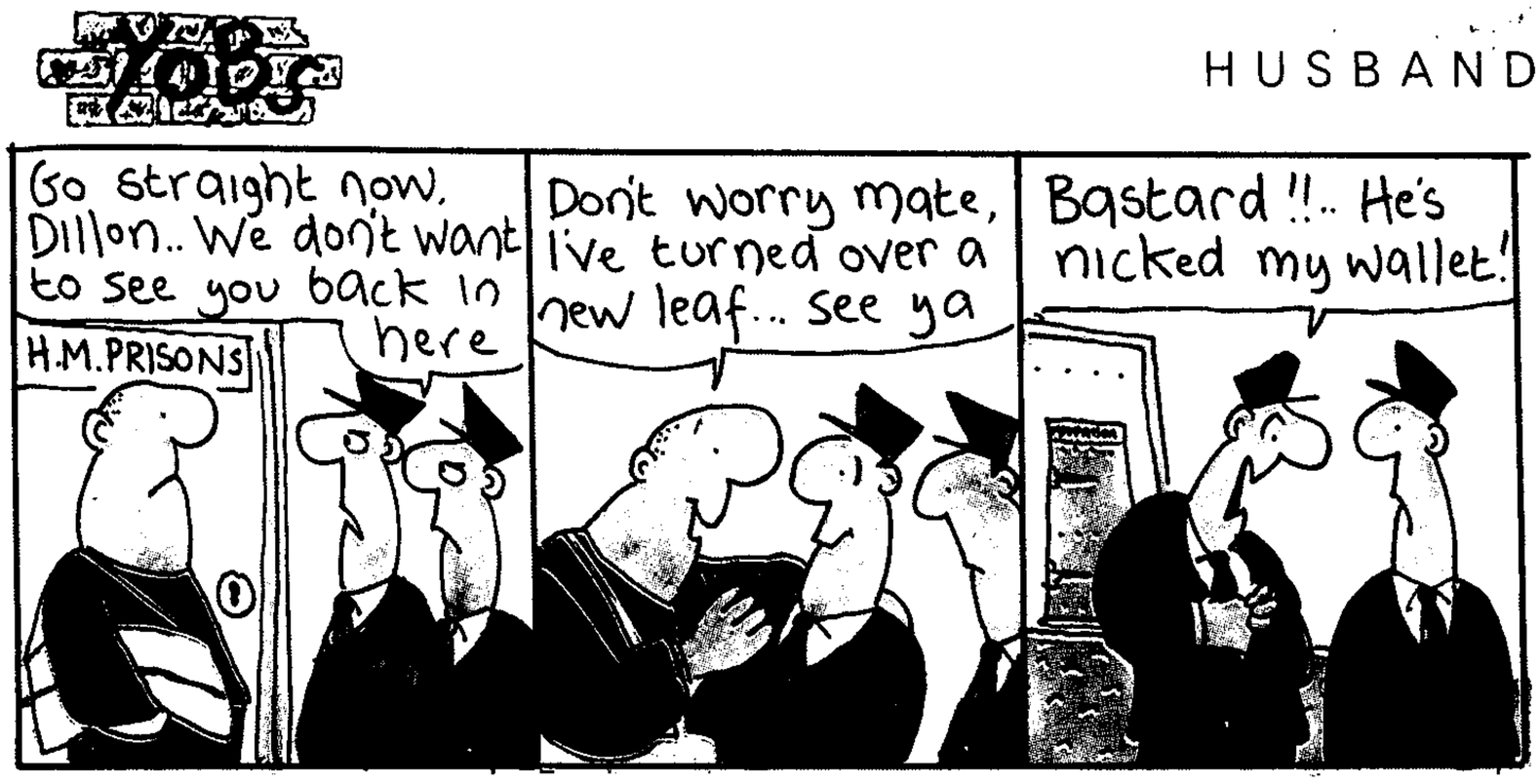
DOWN

1 Arse, on getting drink, cheers (7,2)
2 Dead pissed outside *Cross Swords*, granted (7)
3 Pointless, semen being contaminated by a forced expulsion (5)
4 Semi-topless bloke with a crop (7)
5 One like Milosevic, reportedly in charge of tart (7)
7 Are changes in foot and mouth prevention nothing but a quack's remedy? (4-3)
8 Country type unlikely to be without a lot of money (5)
9 Archer's success tally? Don't believe it! (8)
15 Good semen, it's spilt in unions (8)
17 Repeat orgasm? What's that? (4,5)
19 Queen involved with topless arousal and filth (7)
20 Catastrophe! Liaison is too much for this tragic character (7)
21 'Gaiety' — just the place for shy contenders? (7)
23 Not how Gnome would boast? (4,3)
24 Objectionable type of member (5)
26 Tenor Pavarotti finally cavorting with two girls at 51 (5)

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD 189

ACROSS: 1 A load of bollocks 9 Affable 10 Immoral 12 Kennelled 13 Wind 14 Overheads 16 Dishwater 18 Tell 20 Lost sheep 23 Inter 24 Bolshoi 25 Booze-up 26 Sado-masochistic.

DOWN: 1 Apathy 2 Off-limits 3 Debased 4 Freak 5 Orienteer 6 Lambeth 7 Cyril 8 Solidus 14 On the piss 15 Allotment 16 Delibes 17 West Ham 18 Tripoli 19 Tropic 21 Salad 22/11 Pubic hairs.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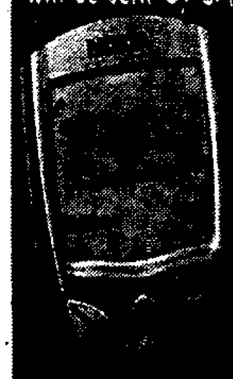

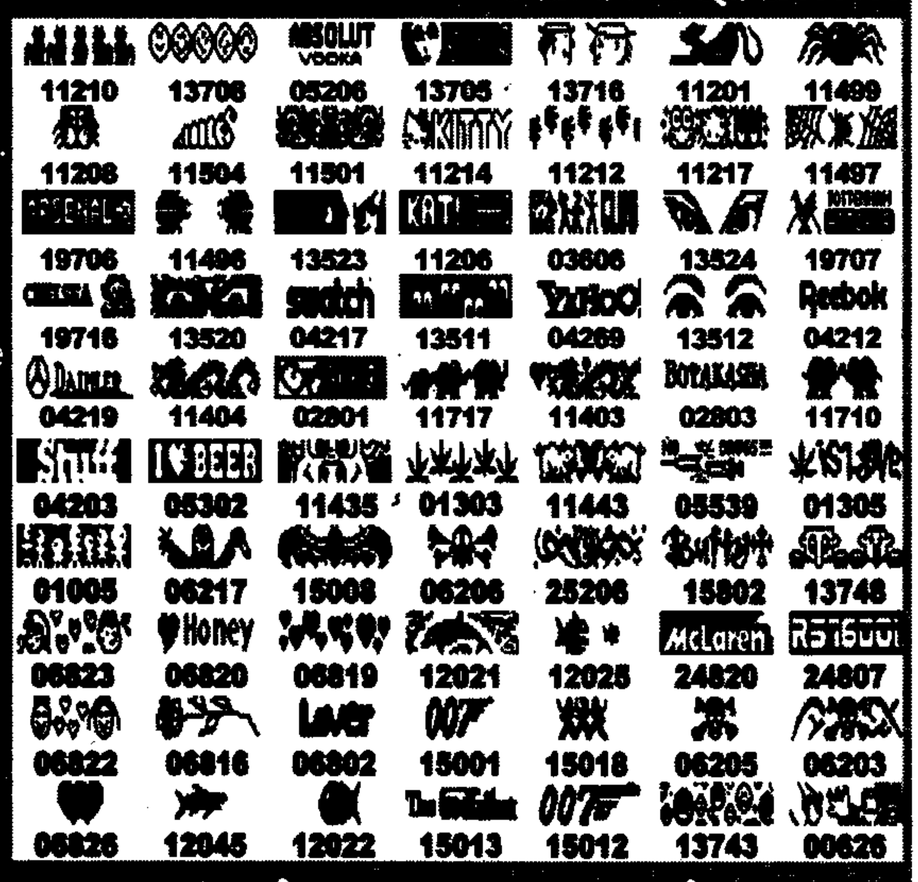

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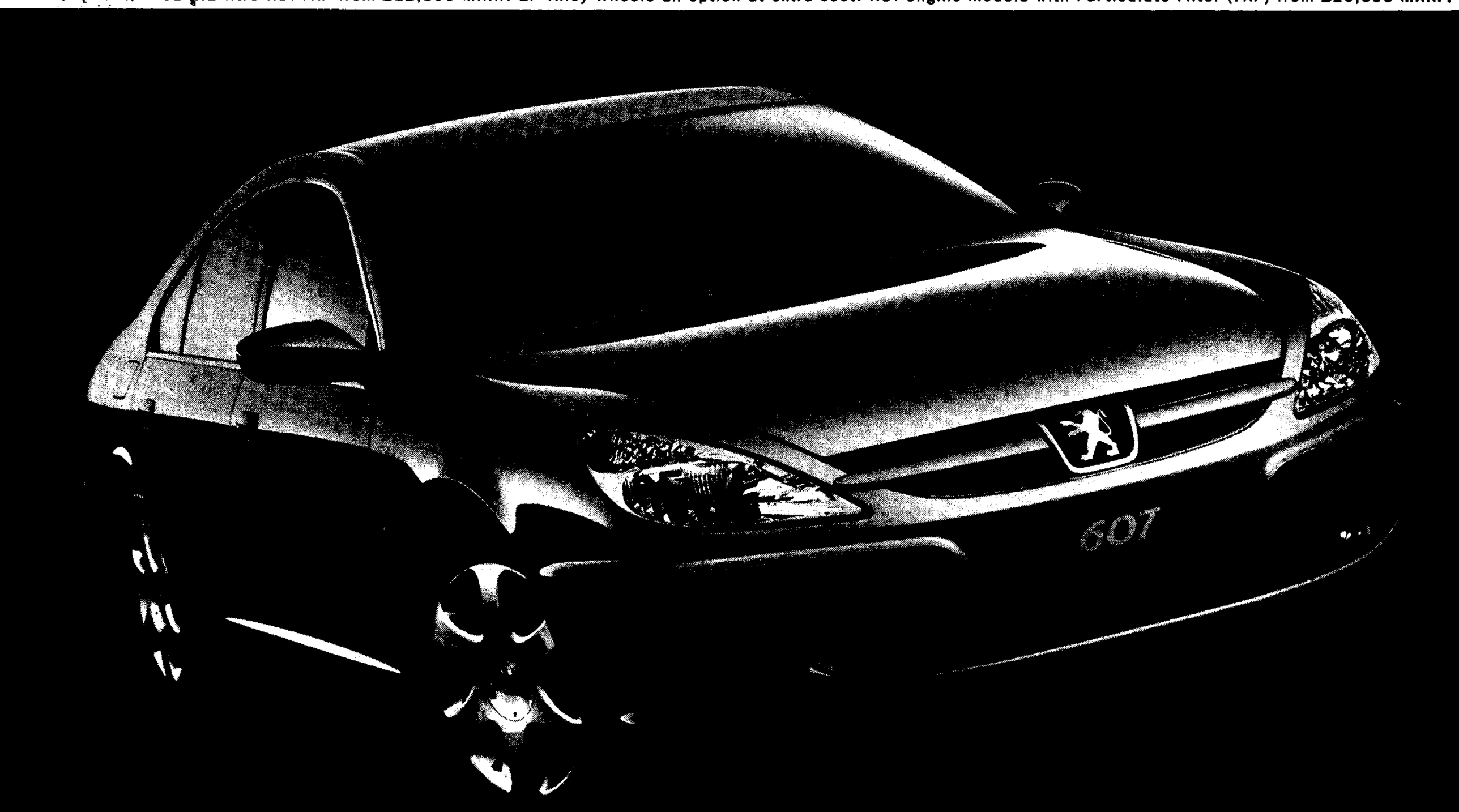

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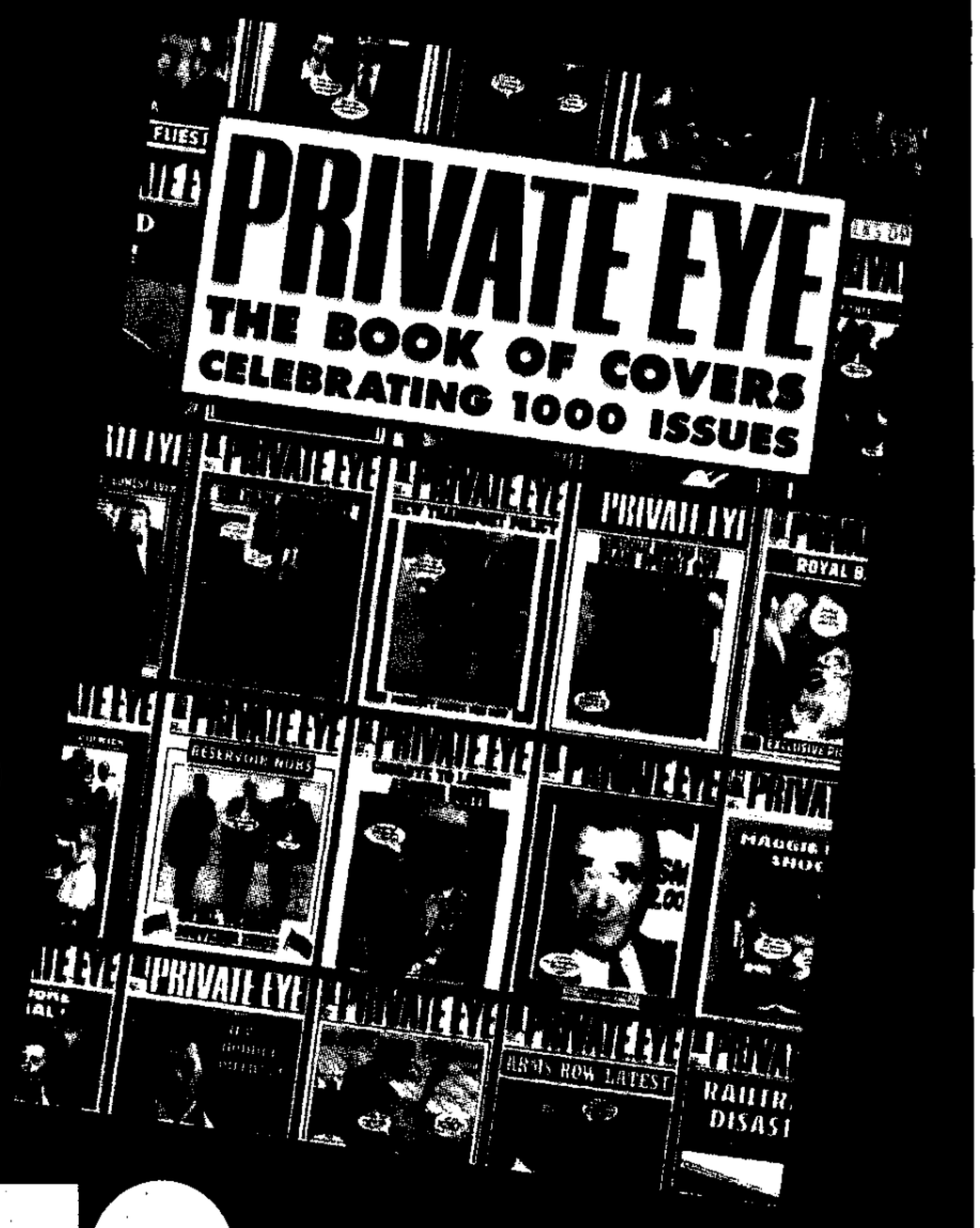

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SEX IN THE 50'S? Divorce in the 60's? TV company is looking for people to talk about changing attitudes to dating, sex, contraception, abortion and divorce since the war. Have you got interesting experiences or stories to share? Call 020 7908 1223 or E-mail: emily.sheilds@rdfmedia.com

SPITTING IMAGE. Enthusiast wants to convince overseas friend that ITV did once have balls. Anyone with a VHS of programme to spare?? Phone/Fax 0141 848 5653.

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EYE NEED

BURNT BY CHARCOL? Dodgy mortgage/insurance sales techniques? Tell us about it! Support/Action Group – Box 0535.

DESPERATELY DIVORCED IN DEBT. Need £10K to start own business. Please help. Abbey National: 09-01-26, 23817244.

FUNDS GIVING GIFTED LAD with disabilities chance to attend music school. Thanks. HSBC 40-46-96, 90011266.

LAST RESORT - struggling to keep up repayments on mortgage since having children. Need to keep this roof over their heads. Please can you help?

FIRST DIRECT 404775 11711121. Thank you.

ARTS PATRONS SOUGHT. Developing Residential Arts Facility in North Shropshire urgently seeks private funding to match potential grant aid. Box 0933.

YOUNG FEMALE GRADUATE nearly overwhelmed with university debts. Please help. Thankyou. Barclays 20-18-41 10279161.

LEGENDARY underground newspaper seeks donations to relaunch via web. Barclays 20-44-86; 30610100

I NEED £2000 to finance my degree - borderline hopeless case! Please help. Lloyds TSB 873731 Acc 74669860. Thank-you.

HELP ME TAKE CARE of an Aids Orphan child any little help will be very much appreciated Thank you. HBSC Bank 22002973 - 404775.

£7000 IN DEBT. Landlord ready to evict me. Please help. Any donation gratefully received. Thank you. 832325 00137559

ME? I SIMPLY NEED FUNDS to reduce the teacher shortage by one. Halifax 11-02-59 00097486. Read more at http://website.lineone.net/~planetride/teacher.htm

PORTOFINO, CUISINE, WINE and love of life - make struggling Playboy happy - £100,000 starter to place in Barclays 20-59-14 A/C 70208426

FOOT AND MOUTH has effected small business. Any help to get over the crises welcome. Nat West 60-30-30 99668645.

SINGLE MOTHER urgently needs help with mortgage payment until September. HSBC 40-06-03, A/C 51374737.

PROMISING STUDENT needs help with funding. Any help greatly appreciated. AbbeyNat 09-01-26, 15217836.

STUDENT CANNOT GRADUATE until university is paid £5000 debt. Please help! Barclays 20-71-06, account 60472549.

BOOK CLUB MADE LIFE HELL. Need 3-4K to go to county court. Any surplus will to go NSPCC.

DESPERATE LADY needs £1000 to keep home. Any help gratefully received. Alliance & Leicester 72-60-06, 64210406.

TALL ORDER – 150K required to help friend (early 50s, has a spinal disease.) The money will help secure accommodation, pay for treatment and allow her to get back on her feet. She has no means of support. Barclays 20-10-53,60483559.

£2,000 REQUIRED for urgent op. Small donations gratefully received. H.S.B.C. 40-24-33. Account 21352245.

ARCHER ISN'T HOUSE-HUNTING, but I am! Can you help with the deposit? Abbey Nat 09-01-26 41595014

REIKI HEALER SEEKS DONATIONS to start therapy centre. ALA. NAMASTE: Box 1334.

VIRTUALLY HOMELESS married man seeks modern motorhome (or funds)from philanthropic persons, for sanctuary/peace/survival. Thanks. Halifax 11-02-54 00032173

DISILLUSIONED NICE GUY found love at last. Needs to clear 8K credit debt to wed beautiful musician. Abbey National 09-01-26, 18118505. Grateful for all help.

LITTLE BOY FIGHTING LEUKAEMIA for 8 years. Mama needs practical/financial input to help fulfil well deserved wish list. Barclays 20-03-26, 40452297 or details from Box 2834.

KIND VULNERABLE (alone and 55) lady being stalked by a monster, simply for being kind. Please help me escape. Box 0734.

AGEISM – pensioner challenging TV licence fee age differential needs fighting fund. Help please. See sss.independent-highlander.com – 87-39-04, 72175560. Thanks.

MALE SINGLE PARENT OF 2, desperate for funds to finish university. Royal Bank of Scotland. Sort code 16-19-31. Account 10024226

PLEASE... Funds for PhD completion. Branson said No! Joanne (0117 902 5422).

FADING BEAUTY requires £250 for primping, powder and paint. Box 0334.

MEDICAL STUDENT NEEDS HELP with funds, please? Thanks! HSBC 40-46-96, 90011274.

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR. Too gung-ho on first attempt needs to clear debts to try again. Eternally grateful. Lloyds SC: 30-18-43 AC: 00630053

DOUBLE ACT – Short'n'Sweet. Money required o.n.o. – 0207 229 1696.

I NEED IMPORTANT OPERATION but still on NHS waiting list. Please help fund private operation. Clydesdale Bank 82-64-08.

DESPERATE WORKING STUDENT needs £4000. Many thanks. Lloyds TSB 30-96-91, 7584052.

MATURE STUDENT SINGLE MAN, mid thirties, needs £6000 to complete Degree course and start new life in teaching. Never written before. Any genuine "eye" readers who would help? Can repay. Donations and letters acknowledged. Please help. Abbey National X7755498KEE or Box 1734.

CANCER SURVIVOR who lives life, needs £5000 to escape rat race and start business on Scottish island. Cooperative Bank 089280, 04176503.

HELP MY DREAM COME TRUE. I need £5000 to realise my ambition and do something amazing, beautiful and spectacular. Alliance and Leicester giro code Account 15804701, sort code 726006.

DIVORCED HARDUP FEMALE undergraduate needs £25,000 to clear debts. Grateful. Barclays sort code 20-89-16. Account number 70101532.

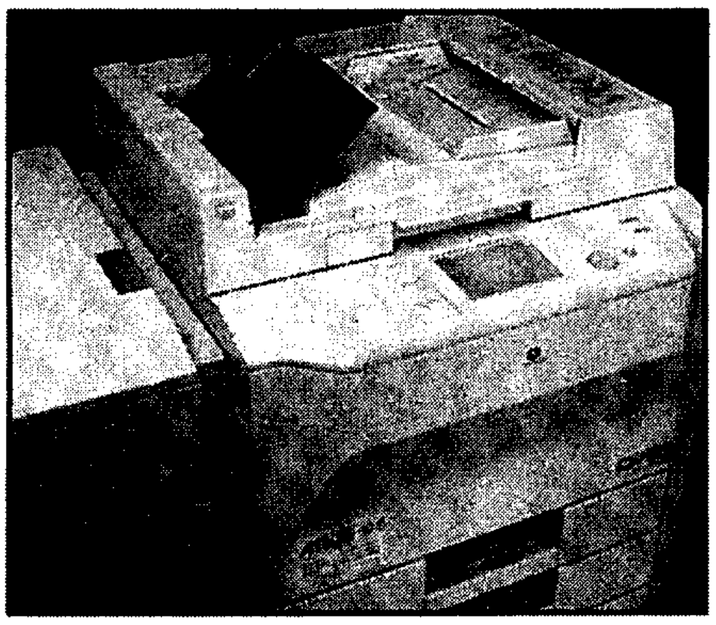
TRAINEE TEACHER/LONE PARENT urgently needs car. Thanks so much. Box 2334.

EYE LOVE

TALL, AMUSING, successful, strict man Bristol/London 40 seeks a naughty younger woman for passion and hanky spanky. I love eating out and eating in, nights on the town and weekends in the country; laughter and the rich tapestry of life. If you would like a fun relationship with some spice and then please contact me with your telephone number. ox 0233 or eveready690@hotmail.com

SEEKING FEMALES looking to break away from daily routine, to have fun and games with attractive fit male, 30, of Indian origin. Age, looks not important, shy and curious welcome. Box 0633.

Lexus LS 400. S reg in good condition. Fleet disposal. Auction price **£9,750.**



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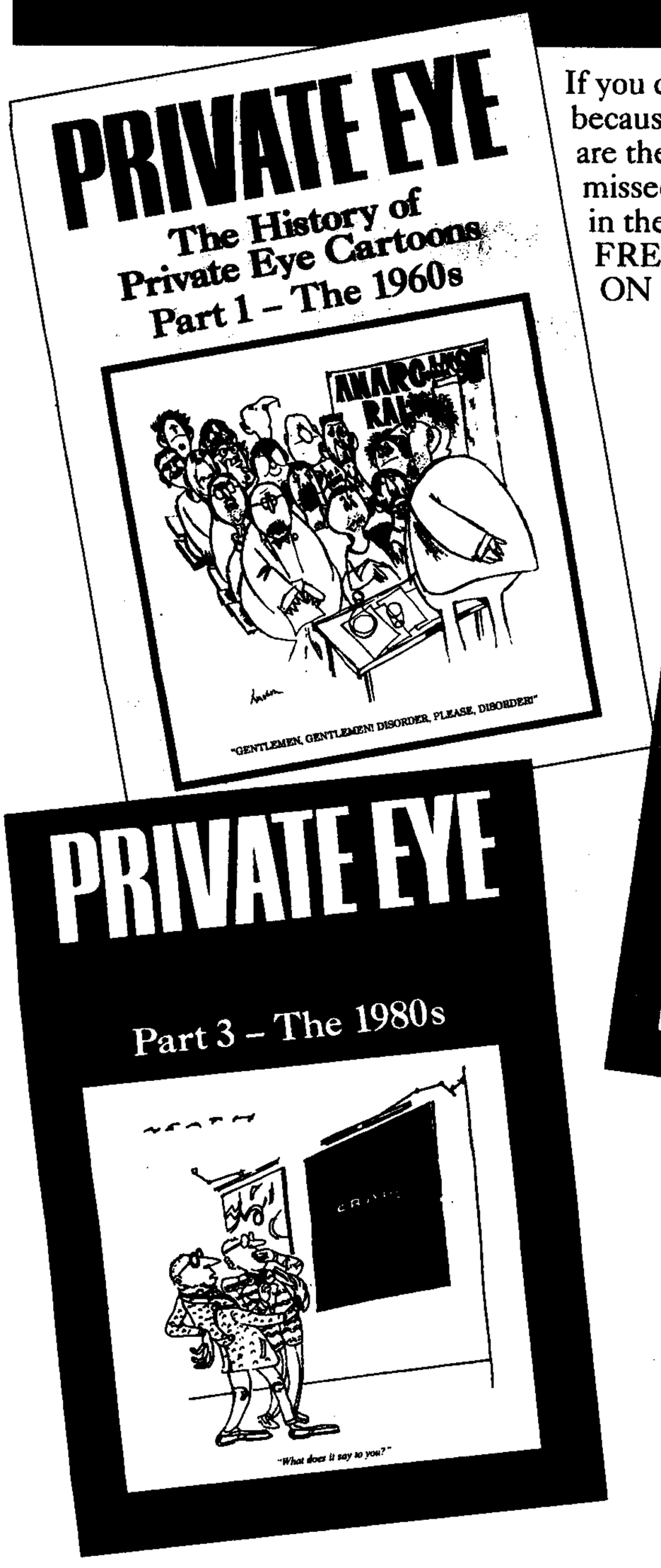

If you can't remember the 60s because you were there, here are the best of the cartoons you missed. For everyone else, revel in the cream of the Eye's first jokes.
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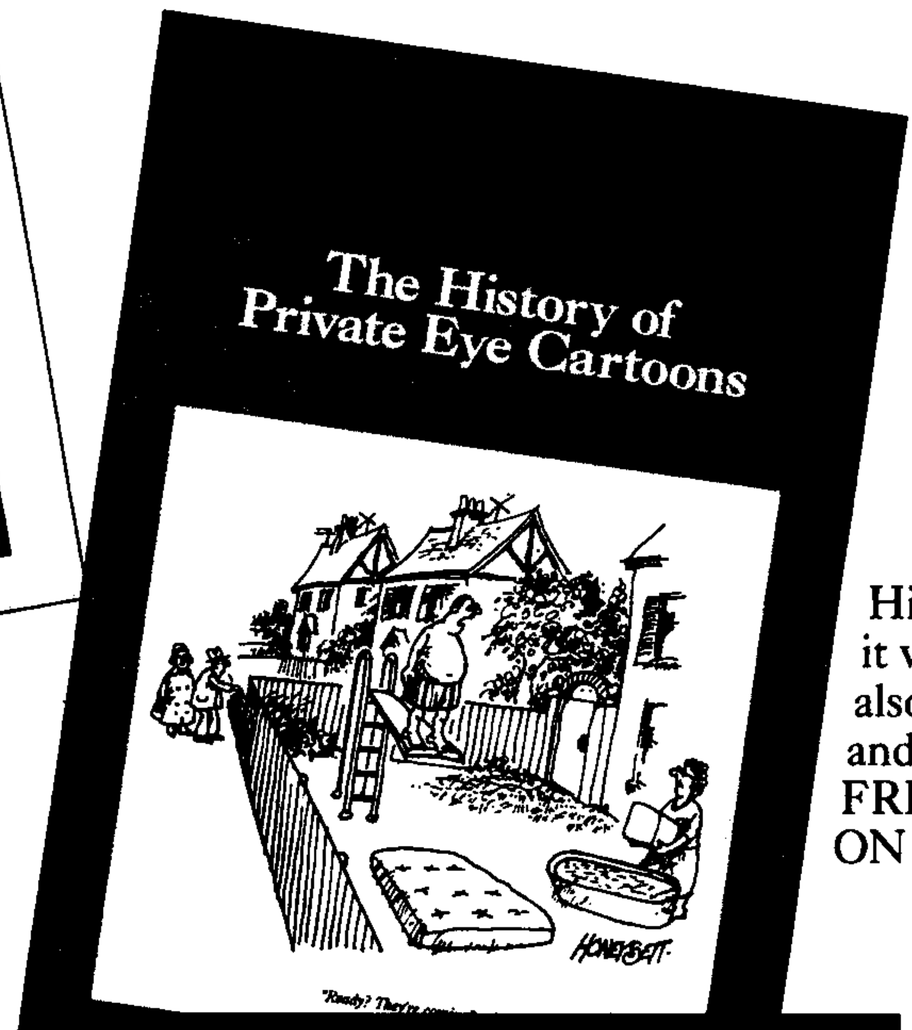
60s, 70s, 80s, 90s – PHEW, WHAT A CARTOON COLLECTION!



Hippies, flares, mullets – but it wasn't all bad. There were also lemmings, desert islands and giant hedgehogs.
FREE WITH ISSUE 1037 – ON SALE 21SEPTEMBER

Greed was good, but Eye cartoonists were better, cashing in on the joke boom. As The Police so aptly put it "Da doo doo doo, da da da da".
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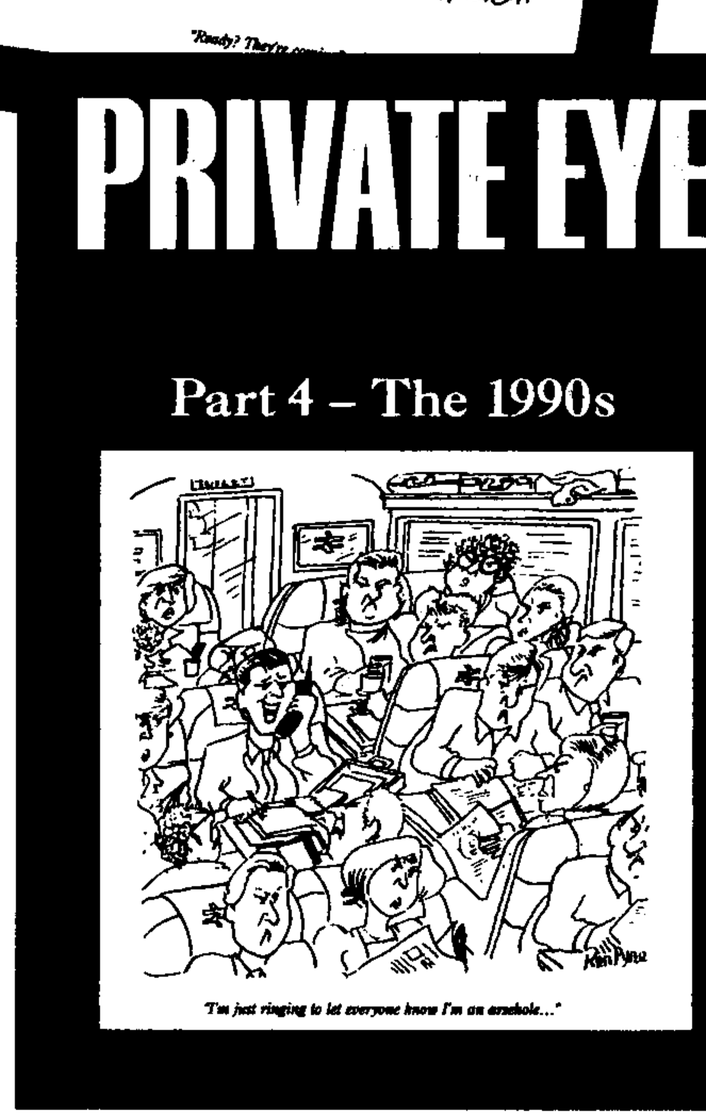

The Eye published over 4000 cartoons in the 90s, more than in any other decade. Here are the best of the best of the best.
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